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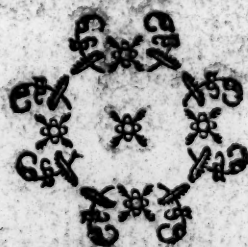
Modern Familiar Religious
Conversation,

A M O N G

People of Differing Sentiments :

A

POETICAL ESSAY.



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To the Reader.

THE occasion of the following Piece was rather accidental than designed. Having had frequent occasion to take notice of the great variety of differing opinions amongst the professors of Christianity, and to remark their spirit, practice, and manner of treating each other; which I had done with some degree of accuracy; and having been one day engaged with an acquaintance in a religious dispute, it afterwards proved an occasion of exciting in my mind the following thoughts:—I imagined to myself a person in great suspense with respect to his religious opinion; yet extremely desirous to learn, and sincerely willing to embrace the Truth. I next imagined this person in his search after Truth, applying himself to the different sects of christian professors one after another, for instruction and direction: he would find every successive party he applied to, would, in its turn, assure him in the most positive manner, that theirs was the *only* true system of religion, the *only* system that

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was agreeable to the Word of God throughout; he would find them very ready also to censure and condemn (with no small degree of acrimony in general) every other party as (more or less) blind, ignorant, out of the way of truth, and involved in error. He would further find, that every party would readily allow, that the Word of God was uniformly and invariably true; and at the same time he would find every one of them professing to ground their various, and even directly opposite opinions upon the *same* Bible, and attempting to prove the truth of their *incompatible* sentiments from the *same* book of God! Under these circumstances I beheld my imaginary inquirer in the utmost perplexity and confusion; he had penetration enough to discover, and generosity enough to disapprove, all the unfair, unkind, and unchristian practices, more or less made use of by most parties, in order to blacken and discredit those who differed from them in their religious sentiments. Yet at the same time, he had sense enough to perceive, and candour enough to own, that amongst all or most of the professing parties, many persons might be

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be found of great natural abilities, various and deep learning, strict morals, and unblemished characters both as men and christians in every practical respect. Yet all this did but serve to heighten his dilemma, and encrease his uncertainty: And being resolved to deal fairly and ingenuously with his own soul, and not to espouse any sentiment merely because such a great man, or such a fashionable or creditable party had espoused it; I saw him fairly forced at last to have recourse to prayer and the word of God, that by comparing what each party in its turn advanced for truth, with that unerring standard, fairly taken together, he might be able to judge for himself. Being in this train of thought, and having something of a poetical turn, I put down (dialogue-wise) some of the first paragraphs of the following Essay, without any farther design, at that time, than to write a short copy of verses for my own amusement; but the subject growing upon me as I proceeded, the consequence was, I have drawn it out to the present length. Indeed, after I perceived that I was likely to proceed farther than I at first thought of, I did form a design.

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to have introduced all the professing parties of modern christians of any note (at least in our nation) one after another; as Churchmen, Quakers, Moravians, Anabaptists, Socinians, &c. and to have given as just and striking a view of the spirit, manner, and distinguishing peculiarities in doctrine of each, as my observation and abilities would have served me for, and then have introduced some proper person to have made some suitable observations upon the whole, by pointing out the mischiefs that attend that spirit of acrimony, ill-nature and persecution, wherewith the different parties, in general, treat each other upon the account of their difference in opinion; and the comfort and happiness that would certainly arise, from their all taking the Apostle's advice, 1 Cor. i. x. to speak the same thing, and be of the same mind, and the same judgment; or at least, if this be not to be expected, in the present state of things, that they would *agree to differ*, and "love as brethren," suffering each person to judge for himself, without tearing each other in pieces. But modern Calvinists and Arminians (so called) being the two chief contending parties

TO THE READER. vii

parties of the day, afforded so much matter for my subject, that I was afraid of exceeding the bounds of a pamphlet if I proceeded farther; I have therefore ventured to publish this first part in its present form; if it should meet with any encouragement, it is possible I may publish a second hereafter, upon the above-mentioned plan. I have endeavoured in this to give as fair and just a representation of the spirit and manner of the different parties I introduce, as I possibly could; how I have succeeded sustaining the characters I must leave the reader to judge. If the reader should imagine that any of the persons introduced speak with too much asperity, or make use of too indecent or abusive language; MATTER OF FACT must be answerable for that, and not the author. As I have taken care for the most part (and especially in those places that may be thought most liable to such a censure) to put no other words in the mouth of the speaker but what I have heard the respective parties utter with my own ears, or seen in print in their books and pamphlets with my own eyes. The use, therefore, a reader ought to make of such a circumstance, if he happens

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pens to be of the party which he thinks to blame, is to take care not to be guilty of the same folly. With regard to what I have taken from the books of the different parties, and put into the mouths of those I have made to represent them, I have in general made use of the author's own words, as near as the verse would admit, and at the foot of the page referred the reader to the places where they are to be found ; and wherever I have taken any thing from another author, to the best of my remembrance, I have always taken care to acknowledge it at the foot. I have endeavoured to be as plain and familiar as I could, as supposing my speakers to be very plain country people, who therefore required a plain country manner and language to make them speak in character. As to the composition and poetry, I have endeavoured to write as intelligibly as I could ; and if a critical reader should discover faults in these, if he consider that the author has had nothing beyond the common education of a person in middle life, it may perhaps dispose him to make all needful allowances. I shall therefore say nothing further of these, but leave them to the candid reader's judgment.



A

MODERN FAMILIAR RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION, &c.

ONE day as Richard walk'd abroad,
 Along the fields in thoughtful mood,
 Revolving in uncertain thought,
 The diff'rent schemes by preachers taught;
 The diff'rent methods of salvation 5
 Blifs t'attain and shun damnation;
 And much desirous in his mind.
 The safest way to heav'n to find;
 But much perplex'd, and puzzled quite,
 Or which was wrong, or which was right; 10
 While this affirms, and that denies,
 What this calls truth, that says is lies;
 Yet both their proofs bring from the bible,
 To show their scheme is justifiable,
 Each wond'ring how the sacred book 15
 Can be by t'other so mistook!

As Dick thus slowly walk'd the plain,
 And various thoughts disturb'd his brain,
 He Matthew meets; a neighb'ring man;
 And thus their conference began. 20

M A T T H E W.

How fares, my friend? What thoughts employ
 Your mind, or thoughts of grief or joy,
 (Says Matt.) you seem in thought profound,
 And studious meditation drown'd.

Says

RICHARD.

Says Dick, I'm strangely pos'd, my friend, 25
 To see religious folks contend
 With such a fierce and bitter zeal,
 Which doctrine's good and which is ill;
 To argue, write and preach so long,
 Concerning which is right or wrong, 30
 While each, and ev'ry one pretend
 To be to sacred truth a friend,
 And make that book (a) their only rule,
 Which Christians own infallible,
 To guide them thro' the dubious maze, 35
 And yet explain't five hundred ways!
 Churchmen, Presbyterians, Quakers,
 New-lights, Independents, Shakers, (b)
 Anabaptists, Antinomians,
 Methodists, and Sandimonians, 40
 Supralapsarians, and Moravians,
 Sublapsarians, and Baxterians,
 Ranters, Mystics, Puritans,
 Inghamites, and Lutherans,
 Many besides of old renown, 45
 Not easy to be noted down,
 Calvinists, Arians, and Socinians,
 Pelagians, Papists, and Arminians,
 Churches Greek and Latin too,
 With many more both old and new } 50
 Than you would think or I can shew. }
 Now, my dear friend, were you to sound
 These diff'rent sects in order round,
 They'd ev'ry one in turn, you'd find,
 Be right, and ev'ry other blind! 55
 And from the bible clearly shew,
 That all they say is surely true,
 And be as pos'tive and as sure
 Their doctrines are both just and pure,
 That they explain the scripture right, 60
 And set it in it's genuine light, As

(a) The Bible. (b) A new sect lately sprung up at Manchester, in Lancashire.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 3

As if they ev'ry one, d'ye see,
 Possess infallibility,
 As they alone deserv'd esteem,
 And wisdom liv'd and dy'd with them ! 65
 " Now which are wise, and which are fools ?
 " The reader's tost among those tools,
 " The more he reads the more perplex'd,
 " The comment ruining the text : " (c) 70
 While each among them to derive
 Their System from the bible strive,
 Most leave the genuine sense behind,
 A sense to suit their turn to find,
 And while their learning they display 75
 Explain the meaning quite away. (d)
 What shall a poor enquirer do,
 To know what's false, to know what's true,
 While diff'rent parties so much vary,
 And give their judgements so contrary ;
 For sure 'tis possible to know 80
 The truth of what the scriptures show ;
 Those fundamental truths at least
 Which we must know or can't be blest,
 Else were we in an evil place ;
 What thinks, my friend, upon the case ? 85

M A T T H E W.

Richard, (says Matthew) to explain
 The various points all these maintain,
 Would be an endless task indeed ;
 And therefore, Richard, I'll proceed,
 (Waving the whims all these conceive) 90
 To tell you, friend, what I believe.

The RIGID CALVINIST'S CREED.

First, then, before the world began,
 Or God had form'd his creature Man,
 By irrevocable decree *
 God order'd whatsoe'er should be ; 95
 What

(c) Prior. (d) Parody on Pope. * See the Assembly's Catechism, Cap. 3.

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What brutes perform, what men transact,
 What angels think, or devils act, †
 All, all is fix'd, both small and great,
 By an unalterable fate. (e)

Next with direct regard to man, 100

This, I believe, is heav'n's plan :
 God long before the world's foundation, (f)

Decreed to full and sure salvation,
 That part of men he did respect,
 In holy scripture term'd elect, (g) 105

Whose souls, tho' fallen and deprav'd,
 Shall irresistibly be fav'd ;

The rest, the greater part by far,
 Not having in his love a share,
 By mercy utterly disclaim'd, 110
 Shall irresistibly be damn'd.

Now the Almighty God of truth,
 Made this decree concerning both,
 Merely his sov'reign pow'r to show,
 On passive mortals here below, 115

Without respect to *sin* or *faith*,
 In those he dooms to life or death,
 For both the *end* is foreordain'd,
 And *means* by which that end's attain'd ;
 So that of pure necessity, 120

One *must* repent, believe, and be }
 Made fit for blis t'eternity ;

(For faith is no condition, Dick,
 As some will ignorantly speak ;
 But those who have it in possessing, 125

Receiv'd it as a cov'nant-blessing,
 And as such, Dick, it shall be giv'n,
 To ev'ry *chosen* heir of heav'n.)

The rest, as necessar'ly must,
 Be wicked, sin and be accurst, 130
 Deny'd the aid of grace divine,
 And left to wallow with the swine,

Pafs'd

† Calv. Institutes, B. 1. c. 16. f. 8. Ibid. f. 3. (e) Parody on
 two lines in a Poem entitled Thoughts on the Divine Decree.
 (f) Ephes, i, 4. (g) 1 Peter, i, 2.

Pas'd by, reject'd with disdain,
 And sentenc'd to eternal pain.
 Why God acts thus? if any shou'd 135
 A reason ask, because he wou'd;
 He thus dispenses good or ill,
 To glorify his sov'reign will.
 This system, Richard, I am told,
 The saints of yore (*b*) did firmly hold; 140
 Thus saint Augustine and Calvin,
 " And fifty other learned men,
 " Attest that if their comments find
 " The traces of their master's mind," (*)
 This must the gospel-doctrine be, 145
 And all besides heterodoxy.

R I C H A R D.

Says Richard, Matt. upon my word,
 Your system's monstrously absurd;
 And tho' my sense, Matt. be but shallow,
 Your horrid scheme I ne'er can swallow; 150
 What, man! shall men be doom'd to be
 By irresistible decree,
 Wicked, deprav'd and sinful first,
 And then for being so be curst!

M A T T H E W.

Says Matthew, Richard, cease thy wonder, 155
 And by reply, or by rejoinder,
 I'll shew thee that th' Almighty must,
 In all these things be strictly just;
 For in the scripture, Dick, you'll find
 This system perfectly defin'd; 160
 So God, you know, does Moses tell
 He'll mercy show on whom he will; (*i*)
 And whom he will, again he says,
 He hardens, and refuses grace; (*k*)
 So Isaac's sons, we understand, 165
 Illustrate much the point in hand;

B For

(*b*) *i. e.* Of former times. (*) Prior. (*i*) Exod. xxxiii. 10.
 Rom. ix. 15. (*k*) Rom. ix. 18.

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For e'er they'd done, or good or evil,
 Esau was sentenc'd to the devil; (*l*)
 Pharaoh was rais'd on purpose too (*m*)
 To be consign'd to endless woe; 170
 And lest such men as you should cavil,
 When by these knotty points you're gravell'd,
 He tells you, (for he never flatters,)
 He gives to none account of's matters, (*n*)
 And checks your vain desire to know, 175
 With, Nay but, O man, who art thou? (*o*)
 Shall men to ask their Maker dare
 Why he has made them what they are?
 And with presumptuous tongue reply,
 'Gainst him who made both earth and sky; 180
 And boldly ask of God th' occasion,
 Why he has made them for damnation!
 Has not the potter power to make
 One pot to keep, and one to break?
 And shall not God as freely show 185
 His sov'reign right o'er all below?

R I C H A R D.

Your notion, Matt. seems mighty odd,
 Of justice, sov'reignty and God;
 (Says Dick) those texts with your addition,
 Set mortals in a sad condition; 190
 But by your leave I've seen it noted
 Of those same texts which you have quoted,
 By pious men, and men of learning,
 Of noble parts, and great discerning;
 The words in common acceptation, 195
 Can ne'er prove abf'lute reprobation;
 The first they say, is wrong translated, (*p*)
 In all the rest the sense wrong stated;
Will, should be render'd *should* or *ought*,
 To give the true orig'nal thought; 200
 And

(*l*) Mal. i. 3. Rom. ix. 11, &c. (*m*) Exod. ix. 16. Rom. ix. 17. (*n*) Job xxxiii. 13. (*o*) Rom. ix. 20. (*p*) See Mr. Sellon's Arguments against Universal Redemption Considered, p. 96.

And what you talk of good and evil,
 And sending Esau to the devil;
 And Pharaoh doom'd to sure damnation,
 Is all your own imagination;
 For all this talk of love and hate 205
 Respects not their eternal state; (q)
 As you with half an eye may see,
 If you would read impartially,
 What next comes after of your noting,
 You likewise put on a wrong footing; 210
 God reprimands the rude objection,
 For finding fault with's rule of action; (*)
 Namely, because that he delivers
 From death, and hell, all true believers;
 And dooms to everlasting death, 215
 All that are void of living faith;
 Whoe'er are lost, this is th' occasion,
 And not an abs'lute reprobation,
 As Paul himself decides the matter,
 Verse thirty-two of this same chapter; (r) 220
 And then to make your scheme look better,
 You bring th' example of the Potter:
 You'd think the potter not o'er wise,
 Who made a vessel tight and nice,
 Only to take a strange delight, 225
 By breaking it to shew his might!
 So unwise you make God by your rule,
 And infinitely more cruel; (†)
 Besides the passage now in view,
 And most of this epistle too, (s) 230
 Does not respect partic'lar persons,
 But Israel and the Gentile nations;
 The blessing too here first intended,
 With which the Jews were first befriended,
 Was the Gospel-dispensation, 235
 Off'ring unto them Salvation;
 This

B 2

(q) See Wesley's Predestination calmly considered, sec. 58.

(*) See Wesley's Comment upon the Place in his Notes on the New Testament. (r) Rom. ix. 32. (†) See a Poem, entitled Thoughts on the Divine Decree, by T. Knight, p. 17. note x. (s) To the Romans.

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This the impious Jews rejected,
 And blasphem'd and contradicted, (t)
 Thrust it from them, and beside
 Their Lord and Saviour crucified; 240
 And judg'd themselves, in acting this,
 Unworthy of eternal bliss.
 'Twas therefore just in God and right,
 To take from them the Gospel-light,
 And pour on them his sore displeasure, 245
 Who now had fill'd their sinful measure;
 But if they'd known their gracious day, (u)
 They never had been cast away;
 For Mercy sure was offered to 'em,
 Else they could ne'er have put it fro 'em. 250

M A T T H E W.

Offer'd, and if; (says Matthew, warm'd,
 And now appearing much alarm'd)
 This talk of yours is out of season,
 'Tis nought, my friend, but carnal reason;
 I disapprove this scheme of yours, 255
 With all your talk of free-will pow'rs;
 I hate to hear your foolish whiff's,
 Your train of *but's* and *and's*, and *if's*;
 You seem to make by your conceiving,
 Salvation hang upon believing; 260
 But this is no right definition,
 I tell you, Dick, there's no condition;
 From *but's*, and *if's*, th' elect are freed,
 Salvation's sure to all the seed;
 For them, and only them, he gave 265
 His Son, to die their souls to save,
 Their souls from favour nought can move,
 Secure in God's electing-love;
 While all the sons of reprobation,
 Shall undergo a sure damnation. 270
 These truths has God thought fit to shew,
 And who shall ask him, What dost thou?

RICHARD.

(t) Acts xiii. 45, 46. (u) Luke xix. 42.

R I C H A R D.

That these are truths, is doubted much,
 Much more that God has shew'd them such;
 (Quoth Dick) your high-flown pos'tive strain, 275
 The question begs and begs again.
 But sure for arbitrary work,
 You'd make a noble tyrant Turk,
 That stern imperious spirit of yours,
 Would make your subjects dread your pow'rs, 280
 Nor dare to make the least objection,
 Howe'er they suffer'd by your action,
 But learn a cringing mute subjection. }
 But this, friend Matt. is not the case,
 'Twixt God and our unhappy race; 285
 For tho' 'tis readily allow'd,
 The all-wise and all-powerful God,
 What seemeth good to him may do,
 In heaven above or earth below,
 Yet nought is pleasing to his will, 290
 Which is in its own nature ill, (*)
 And therefore whatsoe'er he doth,
 Consists with Justice, Mercy, Truth;
 His will is not a tyrant's will,
 That takes delight in being cruel; 295
 And casts ten million souls away,
 In right of arbitrary sway;
 No, no; God takes (the scripture saith)
 No pleasure in the sinner's death, (w)
 But rather would (himself hath sworn) (x) 300
 The wand'ring sinner should return,
 Nor longer his good spirit grieve,
 But quit his wickedness and live;
 Nor has our God, regarding man,
 Reasons of state we may not scan; 305
 He never dooms a soul to die,
 But shews sufficient reason why;

A more

(*) And in particular "he doth not afflict *willingly*, nor grieve the children of men." See Lam. iii. 33. (w) Ezek. xviii. 32. (x) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

A more substantial reason quite,
 (Friend Matt.) than merely sov'reign right :
 And if the reason you'd receive, 310
 'Tis this, they won't in Christ believe ; (y)
 Because God calls, and they refuse, (z)
 Because his goodness they abuse ; (a)
 To his good spirit do despite, (b)
 And shut their eyes against his light ; (c) 315
 Deny the Lord who has them bought, (d)
 And set his love and grace at nought ; (e)
 These are the causes, Matthew, why,
 Their souls are lost eternally :
 Which causes, you may plainly see, 320
 Spring from themselves, not God's decree ;
 For if this latter were the case,
 'Twould cast on God no small disgrace ;
 By making him the proper cause,
 Of mortals breaking his own laws ; 325
 Which must this consequence bring in,
 That God's the author of all sin :
 In short, your scheme appears to me,
 T'include so much absurdity,
 I think whoe'er are right among 330
 The various sects, you must be wrong ;
 And therefore while these things I view,
 In such a diff'rent light from you,
 I'm sure, my friend, I never can
 Subscribe your reprobating plan. 335
 Matt. finding his attempts were vain,
 His friend to think with him to gain ;
 Assum'd a high important strain,
 While thus he spoke ; —————

M A T T H E W.

————— ; Well, Dick, you are
 Blind as a beetle, I declare ; 340
 Your reas'ning pride prevents, I see,
 Your rev'rence to the great decree ; But

(y) John viii. 24. Mark xvi. 16, &c. (z) Prov. i. 24. (a)
 Rom. ii. 4. (b) Heb. x. 29. (c) John iii. 19. (d) 2 Pet.
 ii. 1. (e) Prov. i. 25.

But reason long as e'er you will,
 God, you shall find, is sov'reign still;
 His word shall stand, and he will do, 345
 Whatever suits his pleasure too; —

R I C H A R D.

How slily (interrupted Dick)
 You give my argument the slip;
 The question is not, whether God
 Will do whate'er he thinketh good; 350
 This, Matt. you know, before I granted;
 But this falls short of what you wanted:
 For we must take another measure,
 And ask, if 'tis his sov'reign pleasure;
 Or whether God delight or no 355
 In making souls for endless woe,
 Without respect to any rule,
 But that of his own sov'reign will?
 It is indeed his gracious pleasure,
 Rules to prescribe and set a measure, 360
 Which he declares he'll act by when
 He saves or damns the sons of men; (*f*)
 And this he has a right to do,
 And none may ask him, What dost thou?
 As he's all-wise, he cannot err, 365
 And as he's good, we need not fear,
 He'll aught that's cruel do, whate'er
 Our narrow-hearted saints aver;
 "No evil can from him proceed,
 "'Tis only suffer'd, not decreed; 370
 "As darkness is not from the sun,
 "Nor mount the shades till he is gone."
 Accordingly he tells us that
 (I pray observe it, Master Matt.)
 By our own wickedness and sin, 375
 We have our own destruction been; (*g*)
 And tho' we now are fall'n and curst,
 He made us upright at the first. (*h*) I then

(*f*) See Ezek. xviii. and Mark xvi. 16, &c. (*g*) Hof. xiii. 9.
 (*h*) Eccles. vii. 29.

I then repeat my question, whether
 It be th' Almighty's sov'reign pleasure, 380
 To fore-ordain a soul to be

A sinner of necessity,
 Then plunge him into endless woe,
 For doing what he *needs* must do ?

Here rigid Matt. began to be 385
 Quite tir'd of Richard's company ;
 Matthew howe'er would still have cavill'd,
 But finding he was somewhat gravell'd ;
 Thus (with a proud contemptuous sneer)

M A T T H E W

Reply'd ; Friend Dick, you sadly err ; 390
 I texts could quote as well as you,
 To shew things in a diff'rent view.
 But, Dick, I can no longer stay,
 My bus'ness calls, I must away ;
 I hope in time you'll prove discreeter, 395
 And learn the gospel-doctrines better.

Here Matthew turn'd, and homeward hy'd ;
 Howe'er his place was soon supply'd :
 For when they first began to talk,
 Both Matt. and Dick agreed to walk 400
 To a contiguous mossy bed,
 Beneath a lofty hedge-row shade ;
 For being hot they there could shun,
 The scorching of the mid-day sun.

It chanc'd Dick's neighbour *James* just stood 405
 Behind this range of bushy wood ;
 And during the religious chat,
 'Twixt Richard and his neighbour Matt,
 Friend Jemmy from this private station,
 Had over-heard their conversation ; 410
 And seeing Matthew gone, step'd out,
 With Dick to have another bout ;
 So after mutual salutation,
 Between these two, James took occasion,
 His thoughts before his friend to lay, 415
 Of what he over-heard them say.

JAMES.

J A M E S.

Richard, says he, indeed 'tis true,
 I think with neither Matt. nor you,
 You're neither of you in the right,
 But both beside the matter quite; 420
 Matt.'s sentiments too rigid are,
 He carries things too high by far;
 And by your arguing, Dick, you seem
 To lean too much to th' free-will scheme;
 Your notions seem absurd to me, 425
 I can with neither side agree.

R I C H A R D.

Pray then, dear Jemmy, will you shew
 (Says Richard) what seems right to you;
 If my own heart, James, don't deceive me,
 In this I think you may believe me; 430
 I'm bigotted to no restriction,
 But fair and open to conviction,
 If what as truth you may propose,
 Scripture and reason don't oppose,
 But both combine to fix the sense, 435
 By undeniable evidence;
 If what you think appears to me
 Upheld by this authority,
 I shall with joy as truth receive,
 And readily the same believe. 440
 But yet before my friend replies,
 It may be needful to premise,
 I shall expect your explication
 Of any part of revelation;
 In such a manner be exprest, 445
 As is consistent with the rest;
 Likewise that it consistent be
 With th' attributes of deity.
 So since we now are in the vein
 Of searching matters, pray explain
 The points of doctrine you maintain, } 450
 Display your scheme from end to end;
 I'll most assiduously attend. J A M E S.

JAMES.

Well then, says James, prepare to hear,
 "And I will pour into thy ear," (i) 455
 The doctrines which I recommend
 To ev'ry thoughtful serious friend ;
 The gospel-doctrines on record,
 The marrow of the written word.
 However, Dick, I think 'twill be 460
 A needless superfluity ;
 To dwell upon those points, which both
 My friend and me receive as truth :
 As ; there's a God ; his unity ;
 The doctrine of the Trinity ; 465
 And that the scriptures do reveal
 God's holy, just and gracious will ;
 And that sufficient rules they shew,
 For christian faith and practice too ;
 The fall of man ; orig'nal sin ; 470
 And state depriv'd we all are in ;
 The need of Jesus Christ the Saviour,
 To reinstate us in God's favour ;
 The truth of Christ's divinity ; }
 (With God the Father equal he } 475
 And no inferior deity.)
 Th' atonement which he made to God,
 By pouring out his precious blood ;
 That grace alone salvation brings,
 Man's merit bars ; and such like things. 480
 I therefore shall myself confine,
 Those points of doctrine to define,
 Where, as the case appears to me,
 We mostly seem to disagree ;
 Attend then, Dick, while I repeat 485
 The genuine truths of sacred writ.

The CREED of those who call themselves MODE-
 RATE CALVINISTS.

First then, I do believe God has,
 Decreed whatever comes to pass ; Yet
 (i) A line of Prior,

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 15

Yet, Richard, so as not to be
The author of iniquity. 490

Next, with regard to Adam, Dick,
Who play'd that sad unhappy trick
In Paradise, and by his fall,
To sin and ruin brought us all,
And spoil'd us of primeval bliss; 495
The case, my friend, is clearly this :
Adam our fire and nat'ral head,
At first the Great Creator made
With pow'rs sufficient to have stood,
Tho' free to fall just as he wou'd; 500
He fell, and as I said above,
His fall did our destruction prove ;
For by this first, this mortal sin,
Our souls are render'd all unclean,
Our hearts deprav'd, to folly prone, 505
To evil free, and that alone.

Now, Richard, God of sov'reign grace,
(Foreseeing this would be the case,
Tho' all the race of those that fell
He might have justly doom'd to hell ;) 510
From all eternity decreed
To choose in Christ a holy seed,
Out of the whole corrupted mass ;
Not, Dick, because they holy was }
But such to make them by his grace ; } 515
All else he justly passes by,
And leaves them in their sins to die.

Now, Richard, mark the gospel-scheme ;
'Twas not for any good in them,
For what they was, for what they'd been, 520
For works perform'd, or faith foreseen ;
For none of these God made them his,
And chose them to eternal bliss ;
'Twas *merely* of his sov'reign pleasure,
He chose to take this gracious measure ; 525
The *only* reason was, he wou'd
Because to him it seem'd good.

Now, Dick, in order to fulfill
This purpose of his sov'reign will, God

16 A MODERN FAMILIAR

God made a cov'nant with his Son, 530
 To see this business surely done ;
 The purport of which cov'nant was,
 That when the time should come to pass,
 Which God (his people's steady friend)
 Did, from eternity, intend, 535
 The Son should take upon him then,
 The nature of these sinful men ;
 Be born, and live, and die for them,
 And so compleat Salvation's scheme.
 All this is past, the work is done, 540
 The scheme's accomplish'd by the Son ;
 He all perform'd, 'tis quite notorious,
 Conditional or meritorious ;
 Finish'd the work from end to end,
 And then did up to heav'n ascend, 545
 Where he remains with God to plead,
 And for his people intercede.

Now, Dick, in consequence of this,
 All those design'd for endless bliss,
 At ev'ry time, in ev'ry place, 550
 Are call'd, and by *effectual* grace
 His purchas'd people, one and all,
 Enabled to obey the call ;
 God sends the gospel to their ear ;
 His servants preach, his people hear ; 555
 And in the day, yea, in the hour,
 Of his Almighty gracious pow'r, (*k*)
 He *makes* them willing to obey,
 And own his lawful sov'reign sway.

Nor shall they ever lose his grace, 560
 Or finally forsake his ways,
 But by the pow'r of God, thro' faith, (*l*)
 (As somewhere, Dick, the scripture saith,)
 They shall be safely kept untill
 They stand secure on Zion's hill. 565

This, Neighbour Richard, seems to me,
 The truth, the very truth to be :

I fled-

I stedfastly believe that this
The very gospel-doctrine is,
And therefore warmly recommend, 570
As wholesome doctrine to my friend.

Richard, who all this while had paid
Attention close to what was said,

R I C H A R D.

Reply'd, my Friend, I think that we
Are very like to disagree; 575

For, Neighbour, tho' at first you seem
To disapprove Matt.'s rigid scheme;
And speak in terms more mod'rate than
That positive and rigid man;
(In which I think some dread appears 580
Of your disgusting tender ears;)

I fear you differ but in name,
And that you're mainly much the same.

However, Neighbour, that I may
Afford your sentiments fair play; 585
I'll take them one by one, and see,
If they will bear strict scrutiny.

Your first point, then, appears to me
Absurd, and contradictory;
Or, Jemmy, at the very best, 590
'Tis very doubtfully exprest;

If, as you say, 'tis true God has
Decreed whatever comes to pass;
If this decree is active too
To bring about whate'er we do; 595
And if its sovereign intent

No pow'r can possibly prevent;
As sin of ev'ry kind falls out,
'Mongst other things is past a doubt;
Whate'er you say, 'tis plain to me, } 600
You must, my Friend, make God to be
The author of iniquity.

But, Jemmy, if you understand,
This same decree, we have in hand,

18 A MODERN FAMILIAR

As it respects both good and ill, 605
 In th' actings of the human will ;
 No dire *necessity* to bring,
 But only to permit the thing ;
 Then you and I are here agreed,
 So for this time we'll drop this head ; 610
 Only I'll whisper in your ear,
 You should have spoke your meaning clear ;
 Nor sily left us thus in doubt
 About the case, for truth will out.

What next you say of Adam, James, 615
 Some little observation claims ;
 I think you said he might have stood,
 Tho' free to fall, just as he wou'd ;
 But truly it appears to me,
 That if the said divine decree, 620
 In Calvin's sense be absolute,
 He *needs must* eat forbidden fruit :
 So with respect to good and ill,
 Could not be left to his own will ;
 Now if you judge things order'd so, 625
 Respecting what free-agents do ;
 And that herein the said decree,
 The *cause* of ev'ry action be ;
 You hold an inconsistency. }

You next observe, that Adam's fall 630
 Brought sin and ruin on us all,
 And sunk us in depravity ;
 In this we cordially agree.
 But then, you know, my Friend, St. Paul }
 Observes, as judgment came on all } 635
 The race of man, by Adam's fall ;
 So the free-gift of Pardon came (*m*)
 On all mankind, thro' Christ the Lamb ;
 Are we thro' Adam doom'd to die ?
 Jesus came down to justify ; 640
 And if all fell in Adam's fall,
 Our Second Adam dy'd for all : (*n*)

(*m*) Rom. v. 18.

(*n*) Heb. ii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 14.
 1 Tim. ii. 6. &c.

And therefore, James, you may foresee
 In what comes next we sha'nt agree :
 That God might justly have left all (o) 645
 Mankind to perish in their fall,
 As doubtless truth you take for granted ;
 But, Jemmy, proof for this is wanted :
 Are you right sure of what you say ?
 Where do you find it written, pray ? 650
 What book, what page, what chapter, friend ?
 Not in God's book from end to end ;
 And till from thence you it support,
 I would not give one farthing for't,
 But look on't as precarious rant, 655
 And groundless Calvinistic cant.
 Say you ; God might, you know 'tis true,
 Eternally have past by you,
 And left you in your sins to die ;
 No, 'tis not true ; I that deny ; 660
 That God for my unfaithfulness,
 And misimprovement of his grace,
 Might have withdrawn it long ago,
 And left me to eternal woe
 I grant ; but this supposes I 665
 Have had that grace, which you deny
 A reprobate, upon your plan,
 Has either had, or ever can. (p)
 You say that God by sov'reign doom
 And that alone, has chosen some 670
 Of Adam's fallen ruin'd race,
 As objects of peculiar grace ;
 The rest he justly passes by,
 And leaves them in their sins to die ;
 For Adam's sin it seems, to wrath 675
 Condemn'd, and pangs of endless death :
 For, Jemmy, tho' 'tis clearly known
 They've iniquity of their own ;

(o) See this point settled by Richard, upon a rational and scriptural basis, Verse 3302, &c. and V. 3552, &c. of this Essay.

(p) See Wesley's Predestination calmly considered, sec. 23.

Yet from their Sire, that fallen creature,
 As they receiv'd their corrupt nature, 680
 Which prompts them on to sin and die ;
 (Except the Lord his grace supply ;
 And God, you say, has firm decreed,
 Never to give the grace they need ;)
 They may with great propriety, } 685
 I think, my friend, be said to be
 Condemn'd for his iniquity. }

Now if this really be the case,
 By far the most of Adam's race,
 Are more severely dealt with than 690
 Arch Satan, and his hellish clan :
 This consequence is certain, seeing
 They're damn'd e'er they've a conscious being ;
 Sentenc'd to wrath, and state forlorn,
 And endless woe, before they're born ; 695
 Whereas the fiends were happy made,
 And each a perfect nature had,
 And in their proper persons, all
 Had pow'r to stand, tho' free to fall ;
 But this, you say, is not the case, 700
 With most of Adam's wretched race ;
 So that in this respect they're worse,
 And laid beneath a heavier curse, (q)
 Than Beelzebub himself, who fell
 With all his followers down to hell ; 705
 And therefore, James, *your* gospel-scheme,
 Erroneous and absurd I deem ;
 For tho' I readily agree,
 No merit (r) can in sinners be,
 And that the Saviour's grace is free ; } 710
 Yet granting this it won't infer
 The doctrines true which you aver ;
 Nor can you leave, your scheme maintain'd,
 God's moral attributes unstain'd ;
 Your doctrines held, I think you must 715
 Make God unmerciful, unjust,

(q) See Fletcher's Scripture-Scales, page 351. (r) Viz. No proper merit, or, as the schoolmen call it, *merit of condignity*.

Tyrannical and cruel too,
 Condemning souls to endless woe,
 For doing what they *needs must* do !
 Partial, unequal in his ways,
 Respecting persons, tho' he says
 Himself, in his own sacred word !
 That he's a just, impartial Lord, (*f*)
 Long-suff'ring, merciful and kind, (*t*)
 To sinners of the vilest mind ; (*u*) 720
 Yea, that his love and tender grace,
 Extends to all the human race ; (*v*)
 Not willing any soul should die ; (*w*)
 And therefore does he ever cry,
 Why, sinners, will ye perish, why ? (*x*) 730
 Whereas the Lord, as you relate,
 Has *absolutely* fix'd the fate
 Of most of Adam's race by far,
 Eternal misery to share ;
 To groan beneath his fiery wrath, 735
 And that he wills the sinner's death !
 Now shall I God or you believe ?
 His word or yours for truth receive ?
 To this 'tis easy to reply,
 Let God be true, tho' all men lie. (*y*) 740
 That some are chosen I allow,
 From all eternity ; but how ?
 They are not chosen, James, I deem,
 According to your fine-spun scheme ;
 As God foreknew they chosen are, 745
 As sacred scripture will declare ; (*z*)
 That is, some sinners are elected,
 As other sinners are rejected ;
 Those God determin'd to receive,
 As he foreknew they would believe, 750
 While these he doom'd to endless grief,
 On foresight of their unbelief. (*a*)

(*s*) Ezek. xviii. Acts x. 34. (*t*) Exod. xxxiv. 6. (*u*) 1 Tim.
 i. 15. (*v*) Psalm cxlv. 9. (*w*) Ezek. xviii. 32. (*x*) Ezek.
 xxxiii. 11. (*y*) Rom. iii. 4. (*z*) 1 Pet. i. 2. (*a*) See
 Wesley's Prefervative, p. 180.

Not that I think, my friend, that faith
 Intrinſick *proper* merit hath ;
 Or is the *cauſe* we're fix'd upon, 755
 Except it be *ſine qua non* ; (b)
 And this 'tis plain enough to ſee
 Has nought in't of *efficiency* ;
 But 'twas Jehovah's gracious pleaſure,
 To fix this term, or rule, or meaſure, 760
 Whereby he would be pleas'd to ſhow
 Mercy to finners here below :
 For, friend, I take, (and ſure I'm right,)
 God's knowledge to be infinite ;
 And groſſly ſhould inſult, I trow, 765
 His holineſs and knowledge too,
 If I preſum'd he could not well
 Foreſee free-aſtions and foretell,
 Without compelling men to be
 In conſequence of his decree
 Vile finners of neceſſity. (c) } 770
 Nor does God ev'n proceed *herein*
 As a *mere* arbitrary being ;
 Altho' what Calviniſts aver
 Of ſov'reignty muſt needs infer, 775
 (If things be really as they ſay,)
 That this divine perfection may
 Act in an unconnected line,
 With other attributes divine ;
 But this the caſe can never be, 780
 Friend Jemmy, for God's ſov'reignty,
 Can ne'er a ſeparation prove
 From wiſdom, mercy, truth, and love ;
 For all his attributes, in fact,
 In perfect concert always act ; 785
 And therefore the Almighty's plan,
 As it regards poor wretched man,
 Is wiſely ſuited to his creature,
 Reſpecting both his ſtate and nature.

(b) That is, a *cauſe without which* they are not fixed upon.

(c) See Fletcher's Vindication of Mr Weſley's Minutes, p. 40.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 23

Your cov'nant - scheme comes next, my
 friend, 790
 Which I think wrong from end to end ;
 And that you really never can
 From sacred-writ support your plan,
 Tho' there the cov'nant oft occurs,
 'Tis no such covenant as yours ; 795
 I think, if I mistake not, this
 The genuine gospel-cov'nant is :
 He that believes, whoe'er he be,
 And doth unto the end endure,
 He shall be sav'd eternally, 800
 The gospel-covenant is sure ;
 Th' eternal mountains shall give place,
 The firmer cov'nant cannot move,
 The cov'nant of God's general grace,
 And of his all-redeeming love ; 805
 Whoe'er in Jesus Christ believes,
 And faithful unto death remains,
 He everlasting life receives,
 For so the will of God ordains ; (d)
 This is the firm unchang'd decree, 810
 The word of God's supreme command,
 Fast as the sun and moon we see,
 It doth and shall for ever stand. (e)
 This covenant of gospel-kind
 I can within the gospel find, 815
 But not a trace, I think, of yours,
 In all the book of God occurs,
 Tho' many texts you turn and wind
 In this respect to speak your mind.
 It seems you take for granted too, 820
 That Jesus Christ while here below,
 As to salvation's scheme, did all
 That may be term'd conditional ;
 But tho' you're positive enough,
 This won't be thought sufficient proof, 825
 And

(d) See Mark xvi. 16. and Matt. xxiv. 13, &c. ———

(e) See Hymns on God's Everlasting Love, 2d Part, H. 5.
 V. 13, and 14, by C. Wesley.

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And therefore, friend, I must deny
 "With *ipse dixit* to comply." (f)
 Salvation's terms, the scripture faith,
 Are penitence and living faith;
 Repent or perish, says the word, (g) 830
 Believe or die, says Christ the Lord; (b)
 Now let me one plain question ask,
 Has Christ for you perform'd this task?
 If not how has he then done all,
 That may be term'd conditional? 835
 Perhaps, my friend, you may reply,
 He has done more infinitely;
 It may be so, howe'er it is,
 Beyond a doubt he's not done this; (i)
 The very nature of the facts, 840
 Require, they should be your own acts,
 And tho' we grant the pow'r to do
 Those acts, from God alone does flow;
 Yet for all that, you may depend
 God ne'er will do them for you, friend; 845
 Nor yet by force constrain your will;
 Or irresistibly compel,
 To take the road to heav'n or hell;
 For how should God, was this the case,
 E'er judge the world in righteousness? 850
 The doctrine which you next have fram'd,
 That's final-perseverance nam'd,
 With your foregoing system must
 Stand fast, or fall into the dust;
 If you can prove that one is true, 855
 It comprehends the other too;
 Thy're so connected, they must either
 Stand firmly both, or fall together.
 Upon the whole I think, tho' James
 His brother Matthew's scheme disclaims, 860
 And fain would soften here and there
 A point he thinks is too severe,
 By changing of a harsher phrase
 For one that wears a smoother face; (Which

(f) A Line of Prior. (g) Luke xiii. 3, 5. (b) John viii.
 24. (i) See Wesley's Preservative, P. 223.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 25

(Which yet when all your glossing's past, 865
Comes to the self-same thing at last,)

Yet rigid Matt. as things I view,
Seems more consistent far than you;
Tho' both your schemes I disbelieve,
Nor his nor yours for truth receive. 870

James, who had with impatience stay'd,
While Dick his long reply had made,
With zeal now kindled to a blaze,
And frowning gravity in's face,
Mixt with contempt and sour disdain, 875
Reply'd in self-important strain;

J A M E S.

How strangely, Neighbour, do you speak!
Your arguments are very weak!
Indeed you're got in a sad hole;
I really pity you, poor soul! 880

You talk direct in Wesley's strain,
That blind and muddy-headed man;
If some kind friend would take the pains
To shave your head, and wash your brains,
They'd do you, Dick, a mighty favour, 885
And you might thank them for their labour;

'Tis pity you are not discreeter;
I really wish you to see better;
You may be honest-hearted, Dick,
But sure your head is very weak; 890

Blind, blind! by error held in thrall;
Or, Richard, if you see at all,
Your judgment's dim, like him who sees
Removing men like walking trees; (k)
Your scheme is naught, corrupt I see, 895
'Tis rank Arminian heresy.

R I C H A R D.

Rank heresy! (repeated Dick
"And rais'd his voice exceeding quick;") (l) If

(k) Mark viii. 24. (l) A Line of Prior.

If so, my notions are deprav'd,
Pray can an heretic be sav'd?

900

J A M E S.

I know not, Dick, I will not say,
Perhaps 'tis possible they may;
But if they are, it will require
That they be sav'd so as by fire, (m)
Just tumbled past the fiery gap.

905

R I C H A R D.

Says Dick, they catch a narrow scape!
It makes me tremble when I think,
How near they come destruction's brink;
But sure your judgment's too severe.——

J A M E S.

No, Richard, silence, thou shalt hear;
These folks God's righteousness deny,
And in it's place their own supply;
Rob God o'th' glory of his grace,
And set up Self, Dick, in it's place;
Prate of conditions to perform,
At gospel-doctrines rave and storm;
Exalt their free-will-pow'rs on high;
Make Christ half-saviour, and deny
God's sov'reignty, which if you name,
Their carnal hearts are in a flame;
It hurts their pride, it grates their ear,
The humbling theme they cannot bear.——
Dick interrupting, thus replies;——

910

915

920

R I C H A R D.

You're wond'rous pos'tive, wond'rous wise;
Jemmy, your virulent dispraise,
Brings to my mind what Jesus says;
How say'st thou; brother, let me try
To pull the mote out of thine eye;

925

When

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 27

When lo ! a beam of monstrous size,
 Obstructs the sight of thine own eyes ; 930
 Thou hypocrite ; first learn to free
 Thyself, from that which blindeth thee ;
 Then shalt thou clearly see to spy
 The mote that dims thy brother's eye. (n)
 I think, my friend, as things I view, 935
 These words may well b'apply'd to you ;
 For while you slander, scold and rail
 At those, who tell a diff'rent tale
 From you ; and judge, and sneer, and chide,
 At their carnality and pride ; 940
 Impartial men may see you teem
 With the same spirit you condemn ;
 And while their proud hearts you deride,
 Your own puff'd heart boils o'er with pride.

The Methodists, you say, deny 945
 What you, James, call God's sov'reignty ;
 God's sov'reignty, my friend ! pray what
 May we presume you mean by that ?
 The sacred volume won't afford
 One single sample of the word ; 950
 Mean you a pow'r, join'd to his will,
 To send ten million souls to hell ;
 Or if you chuse a softer phrase,
 To pass them by, deny them grace,
 And let them sink to endless woe, 955
Only because he'll have it so ;
 While to a little chosen few,
 He sov'reign mercy deigns to shew,
 And by his grace that's freely giv'n,
 Draws irresistibly to heav'n ; 960
 That he may manifest the more
 The glory of his sov'reign pow'r ;
 And demonstrate unto all nature,
 His independence on the creature ;
 This horrid scheme, James, I deny, 965
 As an absurd blasphemous lie ;
 Nor does God e'er lay claim I wis
 To such a sov'reignty as this ; It

28 A MODERN FAMILIAR

It runs quite counter to the tide
 Of all his attributes beside ; 970
 If this must stand, the rest must fall,
 'Tis inconsistent with them all ; (o)
 Your own Calvinian head first frames
 A sov'reignty God never claims,
 Then, in the rage of your remarks, 975
 Against those same Arminian sparks,
 (Who insolently dare deny
 With your opinion to comply ;
 Bold and presumptuous men they are !) (p)
 You censure them both round and square, 980
 As full of self, with folly fraught,
 As carnal, proud, and all that's naught.
 But by your leave, sir, may not we
 With quite as much sincerity
 As you, or any other friend, 985
 Warmly and earnestly contend,
 For what appears to us to be
 Real genuine gospel-verity ?
 And if I have a diff'rent view
 In some respects, my friend, from you, 990
 Must it *needs be* that you see right,
 And I am blind or short of sight ?
 Is it not possible that you
 May have a false erroneous view ?
 And while your system you defend 995
 From those who 'gainst your scheme contend ;
 And I attempt to do the same,
 From those who censure mine and blame ;
 Must it *needs be* undoubted fact,
 That I from *carnal* motives act, 1000
 And you as surely *grace* inherit,
 And speak from *dictates of the spirit* ?
 Be ashamed of a conduct, man,
 So disingenuous and vain ;
 And

(o) See Mr. Sellon's Arguments against General Redemption
 Considered, p. 82, 83. (p) See Mr. Sellon's Vindication
 of the Church of England from the Charge of Absolute Pre-
 destination, p. 5.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 29

And 'stead of using slanderous arts, 1005
To censure us and judge our hearts ;
Judge you this rather, not to lay
A stumbling-block in brother's way ; (q)
Paul wishes such a conduct thine,
And surely Paul's a sound divine. 1010

However, James, 'tis false that we
At all deny God's sov'reignty ;
'Tis the *false view* of it you give,
That we oppose and disbelieve ;
Not, Jemmy, as you gladly wou'd 1015
Have people think, because we're proud,
Carnal, short-sighted, and all that ;
But if you chuse to know for what,
It is, because we think it wou'd
Reflect dishonour upon God ; 1020
And highly derogat'ry prove,
T' his goodness, justice, truth and love.
God's sov'reignty I take to be

An amiable quality ;
It is, I dare be bold to aver, 1025
A' qualify'd perfection, Sir ; (r)
Which tho', from any pow'r without,
'Tis uncontrollable, no doubt ;
Yet is it regulated by
His other attributes most high ; 1030
Nor can you, I suppose, e'er prove,
The God of Mercy, Truth and Love,
E'er did, my friend, or ever will
Condemn a single soul to hell,
Merely because his sov'reign pleasure, 1035
Adopted such a rig'rous measure ;
No, in this awful work, my friend,
His other attributes attend,
His justice, mercy, truth and grace,
Always proceed before his face ; 1040
In strict consistence with all these,
He plans his sov'reign high decrees.

(q) Rom. xiv. 13. (r) See Hugh Knox's Letter to Jacob Green, p. 13.

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I take not God, my friend, to be
 A selfish, partial God, you see,
 Who either needeth, or desires, 1045
 Or whose most sacred will requires
 That he, the source of goodness, must,
 At his poor helpless creatures cost
 Display his glory; neighbour, no,
 This view of things will never do; 1050
 I dread, friend, to conceive of God,
 As of a cruel, partial, proud,
 Capricious tyrant; but your scheme,
 Must necessarily, I deem,
 Excite this base idea of him. } 1055
 These folks, you say, in the next place,
 Deny Jehovali's righteousness,
 And steal the glory of his grace;
 Of free-will pow'rs plead much in favour;
 Make Jesus Christ but half a saviour; 1060
 Talk of conditions in their plan,
 And something to be done by man;
 With other charges which you bring,
 Of this, and that, and th' other thing.
 However, James, that they deny, 1065
 Christ's righteousness, is sure a lie;
 They but endeavour to defend,
 Folks from the dangers that attend
Erroneous views of it, my friend;
 And as to what they talk and say, 1070
 Of free-will and conditions, they
 Talk of them in no other sort,
 But as their bible will support;
 This that same muddy-headed John,
 You spoke of, James, and one Sellon, 1075
 With others, which I've heard of lately,
 Have made appear, I think, compleatly.
 Have you e'er read their writings, neighbour?

J A M E S.

Not I; nor is it worth my labour;
 They are not, Richard, worth a puff, 1080
 Poor legal inconsistent stuff! I won-

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 31

I wonder much that you should lay
 Such stress on what these people say ;
 'Tis owing, I perceive, to them,
 You're not in this erroneous scheme ; 1085
 There is a pamphlet neatly done,
 Intitl'd Wesley against John,
 Or John 'gainst Wesley, one o'th' two,
 But, Richard, either way will do ;
 This curious book at large recites, 1090
 What inconsistent stuff he writes,
 And shews you, Richard, clear and fair,
 What bungling work his doctrines are !
 Tho' here and there, friend, I believe,
 He does a Gospel-truth receive ; 1095
 Yet are they jumbled, mixt and join'd,
 With errors of so gross a kind,
 I know not if they'll be forgiv'n,
 I wonder how he'll get to heaven ;
 Who undertakes to fix his creed, (s) 1100
 Will find a tedious task indeed ;
 He's been for fifty years almost,
 From system unto system tost ;
 Yet all this while this wav'ring man,
 Could ne'er fix one consistent plan ; 1105
 His sentiments for ever jar,
 His doctrines with each other are
 For ever at intestine war ;
 Sure contradiction ne'er did see,
 So true a friend and devotee ; 1110
 Many there are who will gainsay,
 What other men for truth display ;

(s) See the Eleven Letters commonly ascribed to Mr. Hervey,
 and Mr. Toplady's Letter to Mr. Wesley, with other late
 Publications, where the abusive Names and scurrilous Lan-
 guage which James makes Use of on this Occasion, may be
 found, either directly or indirectly, in a positive or compara-
 tive Sense, applied to Mr. Wesley ; besides a great Variety of
 Billingsgate Language liberally bestowed upon him from
 Time to Time, by a great Number of Calvinistic Writers
 upon other Occasions.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 33

As for that Sellon, Richard, who
 You spoke of, he's but so and so; 1155
 His character is none too good;
 The Methodists themselves, Dick, wou'd
 Allow thus much, in former days;
 I've heard much said in his dispraise;
 His temper, far as I could learn, 1160
 Is sour, unsociable and stern;
 And, Dick, if fame has not bely'd him,
 The very maids could not abide him;
 He never yet profess'd to be
 Possess of gospel-liberty; 1165
 Nor in his heart has e'er abode
 One spark, Dick, of the love of God;
 And for his weak abusive writing,
 It is not really worth reciting;
 The works he has produc'd, are all 1170
 Dreadfully diabolical;
 Against the truth he draws his sword,
 A vile perverter of God's word;
 His writings, Dick, deserve the fire,
 Or treading in the dirt and mire. 1175

R I C H A R D.

Have you e'er known the man (says Dick,)
 Or read the works of which you speak?

J A M E S.

The man I know not, nor have read
 Much of his works, but hear it said
 That things are thus; by this I go; 1180

R I C H A R D.

So all great liars do, you know
 (Says Dick,) and rising from his place,
 With kindling anger in his face,
 Th' abuse and slander, James, had vented
 He thus with gen'rous warmth repented. 1185
 O shocking, James! of all the crew
 Of slander'ing folks I ever knew,

34 A MODERN FAMILIAR

Of all th' abuse I e'er heard mutter'd,
 Sure none surpass'd what you have utter'd !
 Knave, porter, oyfter-woman, quack, 1190
 Apostate, idiot, chimney-jack,
 A lying sophister ! a pope,
 Bellwether of a purblind troop ;
 A pest and nuisance to the nation,
 Forgery, tyburn, transportation ; 1195
 With many other terms as vile
 Appear to be your fav'rite stile !
 Sellon's ill-natur'd stern and proud,
 Perverter of the word of God ;
 His works abusive, weak, and all 1200
 Vile, dreadful, diabolical ;
 Deserving to be burnt, and he
 Devoid of gospel-liberty !
 What circumstance, James, can excuse
 This scandalous torrent of abuse ? 1205
 Or claim you an exclusive right,
 To rail at others, snatch and bite ;
 And to pull both, (to save your thesis)
 Their creed and character to pieces ?
 If such abuse and calling names, 1210
 Do not prove evil-speaking, James,
 In that approaching awful day,
 When you must count for what you say, (t)
 When th' trumpet sounds and th' dead shall waken,
 I shall be very much mistaken : 1215
 But tho' you make so great a mock
 Of Wesley, and his purblind flock,
 Be fool or knave or what he may,
 He's done much good i'th' land, I say, 1220
 'Specially 'mongst the lower class,
 Where numbers now are well to pass,
 Who, 'tis well known, were us'd before
 To drink and rant, and swear, and whore ;
 But now are sober, chaste, and who 1225
 Now speak a purer language too ;
 And are, as any man may see,
 More useful to society ; Better

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 35

Better as father, husband, wife,
And each relation, James, in life ; 1230
So tho' you should not comprehend
Eternal consequences, friend,
As this appears to be the case,
'Tis undeniable now, as

He has the peoples morals mended, 1235
He has the common-wealth befriended ;
And so deserves from all, I deem
At least some measure of esteem ;
Now, as I think, these were not made
To quit their sins by Satan's aid, 1240
I therefore must conclude his labour
Is own'd and blest'd by heav'nly favour ;
If so you then should careful be,
How you obstruct his ministry,
Left in the end, my friend, you shou'd 1245
Be found to be opposing God.

I've oft observ'd, my friend, beside
When Wesley's folks are multiply'd,
It never fails to add the more
To those that follow Calvin's lore ; 1250
For many of those men, who late
Were rous'd out of their carnal state
By Wesley's means, or that of those
Who labour with him in the cause ;
Thinking they've got a clearer sight, 1255
And getting into greater light ;
Ev'n into broad Calvinian day,
They see much better (as they say,)
By scanning things in Calvin's view,
And come by hundreds o'er to you. 1260

Besides in their peregrination,
(I've often made the observation,)
They visit many wicked places,
Where Calvinists ne'er shew'd their faces ;
No place or people to invite, 1265
And hear their preaching with delight ;
No sect or party to be giving,
Fair proffers of a handsome living ;

No

36 A MODERN FAMILIAR

No, not so much, as ev'n that poor
 Encouragement, an open door : 1270
 Thus have they very often gone,
 Despis'd, unfriended, and alone,
 Expos'd to all the rage and spite
 Of furious mobs, those sons of night,
 Where most poor sinners they might meet, 1275
 In field, or market-place, or street,
 And preach'd the word ; while cuffs and kicks,
 Abusive language, stones and bricks,
 Blows, threatnings, street-dirt, channel-dregs,
 Potatoes, turnips, rotten eggs, 1280
 With oaths and curses all around,
 Has been the welcome they have found.
 Yet often has their gracious Lord,
 Been pleas'd to own and bless their word,
 And in such places set before 1285
 Their faces, James, an open door,
 And many of the most stouthearted,
 Have very often been converted.

Now mostly, James, in ev'ry place,
 Where this has been the happy case ; 1290
 No sooner have their meetings been
 Join'd by a set of serious men ;
 And preachers might i'th' street be seen,
 Yet keep their wigs and doublets clean ;
 Might preach, without a mob or riot, 1295
 And things were tolerably quiet ;
 I say, when things thus far have gone,
 Your party, James, comes pouring on,
 To pull and tear with all their might ;
 With their fine tales of greater light ; 1300
 With their hearts brim-full of hot-zeal,
 And their mouths of gospel ! gospel !
 Gospel-ministers ! and then,
 Gospel-doctrines ! gospel-men !
 As tho' they shar'd among their band, 1305
 All the gospel in the land ;
 Yet is this famous gospel-stile,
 Wherewith they simple souls beguile,
 But Calvin's gospel all the while !

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 37

Howe'er they very often raise
A Church, from Wesley's runaways. 1310

Now, James, as it appears so plain,
That their increase, still proves your gain;
Ev'n pure self-int'rest should engage
Your sect, methinks to drop their rage, 1315
And civil be, they and their teachers,
To poor John Wesley and his preachers.

J A M E S.

John Wesley's preachers, Dick! alack!
His preachers are a wretched pack!
Do but examine them, you'll find, 1320
They're mostly ignorant and blind,
Illiterate, weak, unknowing men,
And rank enthusiasts, who when
They're weary of their sev'ral trades,
(As cobblers, Dick, and such like blades,) 1325
Renounce the world, its toil and strife,
To lead an idle saunt'ring life;
And tho' scarce sharing common sense,
Religious holders-forth commence,
And pour in phrase uncouth and rough, 1330
A flood of incoherent stuff.

Indeed 'tis true among this kind,
You some of better parts may find;
But most of these, Dick, when the Lord
Gives them right knowledge of his word, 1335
The genuine gospel-doctrine shews,
And favours them with clearer views;
Renounce John Wesley and his teachers,
And join th' enlighten'd gospel-preachers;
Where each of them, my friend, soon shines, 1340
Among the best of our divines,
And then with zeal oppose the more,
Those errors which they taught before.

You see, Dick, men of greatest sense,
Calvinians soon or late commence; 1345
A circumstance of no small weight,
To prove their scheme of doctrines right,

As

38 A MODERN FAMILIAR

As these must needs more knowing be,
Than those of less capacity.

R I C H A R D.

More knowing be! (says Richard,) hold; 1350
One tale is good, while t'other's told;
If doctrines must acceptance claim,
'Cause men of sense, and men of name
Espouse them, then (I think it true,)
They might produce as good as you; 1355
For if some men of sense desert them,
Yet other men of sense assert them;
But this remark is of no weight,
For, at this rate, all would be right;
Since men of sense, in ev'ry kind 1360
Of sect or party you may find.
But James, it seems, you take for granted,
The reason why these men recanted
Their former scheme, was greater light,
And understanding doctrines right. 1365
But, some demur may well be made,
I think, my friend, to what you said,
And other motives be assign'd,
For this their sudden change of mind.
Perhaps they thought they should be giving 1370
Some heed to get a better living;
And looking out for needful pelf,
Genteelly to provide for self;
And seize that scheme where they might find
Their int'rest, ease, and honour join'd. 1375
Now Jemmy, I'll appeal to you,
If you don't think what follows true;
There needs no great degree of light,
No mighty clearing of the sight;
To see, my friend, as clear as day; 1380
A certain, settled, handsome pay
And comfortable home beside,
With ev'ry needful thing supply'd;
Is far preferable to those
Who get but barely meat and cloaths, 1385
And

And knew you all, you often wou'd
Discover, these were none too good.

Blind with a witness must he be,
Who cannot very clearly see,
Two, three, or fourscore pounds a year, 1393
Perhaps, sometimes, one hundred clear;
A good snug house wherein t' abide,
Enough to eat and drink beside;
No great occasion much to stir,
And honour'd with—Your Rev'rence, Sir; 1395
On Sundays preach, and if he please
So far to interrupt his ease,
A sermon now and then beside,
For which he's with a treat supply'd;
Sometimes a coach to take the air; 1400
A genteel drefs, an easy chair,
Wherein to sit and break a joke,
And laugh at Wesley's foolish folk,
Who trudge about, and sometimes lack
A decent covering for their back. 1405.

All this is much, much better than
To be a rambling Wesley-man,
And often be content to share
A thread-bare coat and simple fare;
To lodge, (instead on bed of down,) 1410
With some poor simple cottage-clown;
To tofs about now here, now there,
And run they know not when, nor where,
In danger be from mobbing-strife,
Of losing either limb or life; 1415
Once and again preach ev'ry day,
And talk their very lungs away;

J A M E S.

Hold, Dick! how fast you run an end;
I'll tell you what I think, my friend,
(Says James,) I think they'd all be glad 1420
If opportunity they had,
The footsteps of their friends to trace,
And each to get a better place;

And

40 A MODERN FAMILIAR

And only swim in Wesley's water,
Because they cannot mend the matter. 1425

R I C H A R D.

You give them, like some other folk,
A peck, I think, out of your stroak;
(Says Richard,) but, my friend, I must
Tell you, your thinking is unjust;
For 'mongst those who are plac'd by you, 1430
In such a mean and selfish view;
I know myself some worthy names,
Above such dirty motives, James;
But granting your objection true,
It comes with a bad grace from you; 1435
As many by your party sent,
Are in the same predicament;
See Tommy, Timmy, George, and Jemmy,
Just step'd out of the academy;
Are glad at first a place to take, 1440
Some thirty pounds a year may make;
And their dear flock, O! they'd not leave 'em,
For e'er so much, if you'll believe 'em;
But if a greater living falls,
Why then, 'tis *providence* that calls; 1445
They heed not *money*, no, not they;
'Tis *providence* points out their way;
(But, truly, James, they always find,
This *providence* is very kind!
It ne'er disturbs itself by giving 1450
Its favourites a *poorer* living;
No, no; it shews more love and grace,
And always finds a *better* place.)
They won't their present flock abuse,
But they can be of greater use; 1455
As how, pray? why, the number there
Of precious souls, is more than here;
Besides their courage prompts to face,
Some reigning error of the place;
To combat schism, in zealous fight, 1460
And set the neighb'ring blockheads right;
Or failing here, at least t' expose
Th' erroneous doctrines of their foes; Their

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 41

Or failing here, at least t' expose,
Th' erroneous doctrines of their foes;
Their wrong opinions kick and cuff,
And give them genuine gospel-stuff. 1465

Thus having steer'd their passage wide,
O'th' rocks of *avarice* and *pride*;
(Unchristian vices, 'tis well known,
And which no parson cares to own;)
And giv'n staunch arguments to prove, 1470
Their *pious* motives of remove;
With *tears* they preach their farewell; then
Leave the *poor* place to needier men.

J A M E S.

Fie, fie! (says Jemmy) neighbour Dick,
How keen and spitefully you speak! 1475
Sometimes 'tis absolutely needful,
Our youthful parsons should be heedful,
To change a worse for 'better place:
As when their families encrease;
What would for one genteelly do, 1480
Will not keep wife and children too;
So that in such a case as this,
I think the lads don't act amiss;
Tho' they should earnestly be striving,
To get into a better living; 1485
'Tis prejudice, Dick, blinds your sight,
And shews you things in the worst light,
Respecting Calvinists, for here
You're most ill-natur'dly severe.

R I C H A R D.

Not more so than my reprimander; 1490
Why, sauce for goose, is sauce for gander,
Our homely proverb says, and truly,
Who but must think, if they think duly,
You well deserve, as things appear,
The application of it here: 1495
For but just now (you know 'tis true,)
All Wesley's Preachers stood by you,
Charg'd with the same mean venal view;

E

Yet

42 A MODERN FAMILIAR

Yet soon as I remark the same
Mean conduct in your Priests, and blame 1500
Their high ambitious aims, why then
I'm spiteful, prejudic'd, and keen.
But surely, James, you've little cause,
(Would you consider your own flaws,
And what you think and speak amiss) 1505
T' upbraid your friend with prejudice:
For you can soon for your own kind,
A mitigating salvo find;
And with a specious col'ring, James,
Can varnish o'er their selfish aims; 1510
Not once it seems reflecting that,
The same excuse will suit as pat,
The case of poor John Wesley's teachers,
As that of their own gospel-preachers;
For if the pleas their parsons use, } 1515
Will justify their selfish views,
The same will Wesley's men excuse: }
But, James, th' old proverb verifies,
" Love's blind, and malice has four eyes."

J A M E S.

Says James, I'll tell you, neighbour Dick, 1520
If I my thoughts must plainly speak;
So warmly you these folks defend,
I think you're very much their friend;
Or rather, it appears to me,
You're one of their society; 1525
Altho' from what at first you said,
One would have thought you had not made,
A choice of any system, Dick,
(For so I'm sure you seem'd to speak)
But was of quite uncertain mind, 1530
And had your principles to find;
Whereas you seem in your opinion,
To be a genuine Arminian.

R I C H A R D.

You miss it not, says Richard, quite,
You're partly wrong, and partly right; 1535
I own

I own ingenuously to you,
 I think their doctrines nearly true;
 I am not, Jemmy, of their sect,
 But I the people much respect;
 Wish well to what they chiefly teach, 1540
 And often go to hear them preach;
 Yet bigot am I not so hearty,
 To people, principle, or party,
 But that if any one can shew,
 My tenets are not just and true, 1545
 I will renounce them gladly then,
 And learn to think with wiser men.

J A M E S.

So far, so well, (says James,) but friend,
 Their preachments why do you attend?
 I wonder folks so much shou'd throng 'em; 1550
 They've no church-order, Dick, among 'em;
 So that if this confused breed,
 Of either ord'nance (u) stand in need,
 One must run here, another there,
 To church, or meeting, none knows where; 1555
 And on this fashion, all their lives,
 Must blunder on, at fours and fives;
 They've no church-officers of worth,
 As Elders, Deacons, and so forth;
 Their very Preachers are such poor } 1560
 Weak men, as hardly ever bore
 The name, or e'er were seen before;
 An unordain'd, mechanic clan,
 They're neither sent by God nor man;
 Sure such a hotch-potch jumbled throng, } 1565
 You find not all the sects among,
 That to the christian name belong.

R I C H A R D.

Says Dick, whoe'er these folks may shew, }
 In a too-favourable view,
 We need not fear 'twill e'er be you. } 1570

(u) Viz. Baptism or the Lord's Supper.

44 A MODERN FAMILIAR

Tho' by your words I'm not put under
The very least surprize or wonder ;
For I am by my bible told,
'Twas just the case in time of old,
With Matthew, Simon, Peter, Paul, 1575
And other christian men, who all
Were always held in great disgrace,
By the proud pharisaic race.

However, James, I do in part
Agree with you with all my heart ; 1580
As to the last remarks you made,
And what you of church-order said ;
Were they a full dissent to make,
And could among themselves partake
'Those ordinances of the word 1585
Baptism and supper of the Lord ;
It would be more convenient far
I own, than being as they are ;
And I believe for these same flaws,
Some thousands have forsook their cause ; 1590
And therefore as their friend I cou'd
With all my heart, James, wish they wou'd
In this respect reform their plan,
As soon as possibly they can.
Not that I take the case to be 1595
Of absolute necessity ;
For here I think their situation
Is not of such consideration,
As to endanger their salvation ;
But only needful as it imports 1600
Greater conveniences and comforts.

What you say of them as a clan,
'That's neither sent by God nor man ;
Shews you right willing to degrade ;
But 'tis not prov'd, but only said ; 1605
And only serves I think, to prove
Your want of candour and of love.

God said, you know, to those that went
Of old to preach but were not sent ; (v)

(v) See Jer. xxiii. 32.

Their

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 45

Their unrequir'd officious call, 1610
Should do the souls no good at all,
To whom they prophesy'd, and so
They from this circumstance might know
And see at once as clear as light,
That their commission was not right. 1615

On th' other hand Jehovah says, (*w*)
Who turn the wicked from his ways,
And cause the sinner to repent,
Are surely by his spirit sent.
Now this I think with justice, I 1620
To Wesley's preachers may apply;
For by their word (which you despise,)
If we may credit our own eyes;
Thousands have been to God converted;
Their evil ways have clean deserted; 1625
Been won from fallen nature's night,
And brought from darkness into light;
A weighty circumstance to prove,
Their mission, James, is from above.

J A M E S.

Well, well, (says Jemmy,) neighbour
Dick, 1630
Tho' one should prove them e'er so weak,
Far as you can, I find you will,
At any rate defend them still.
But I've another great objection;
What think you, friend, of their perfection? 1635
For which they so renowned are;
'Tis perfect nonsense I declare!
A monstrous doctrine I maintain,
As e'er was forg'd by muddled brain;
And those who dream themselves perfected, 1640
Are such a set of weak, vain, wretched,
Foolish, enthusiastic men,
As hardly e'er before were seen;
They never knew themselves aright,
Or saw their hearts in a true light; 1645

(*w*) See Jer. xxiii. 22.

In short, they're nothing else beside,
A hash of ignorance and pride.

RICHARD.

Hush ! hush ! (says Dick,) you're angry, man ;
Compose your mind, James, if you can,
For should they here have err'd and dreamt, 1650
They claim your pity, not contempt.
But I my neighbour James can tell,
It would become him wond'rous well,
If speaking of these matters, he
Would speak with greater modesty ; 1655
For, nonsense, monstrous, muddy-brains,
Weak, wretched men, and such like strains ;
With other pretty names you call,
In argument mean nought at all.
And truly, I'm surpriz'd to see, 1660
My friend should so dogmatic be,
For 'gainst these same perfection-men,
You are as positive and keen
As if, my friend, the very word,
Was unscriptural and absurd ; 1665
Whereas in scripture may be seen
Accounts of sev'ral perfect men ; (x)
Ev'n Jesus speaks to this effect,
And says himself, Be ye perfect ; (y)
And Paul in many parts you know, 1670
Exhorts unto perfection too ; (z)
John likewise mentions some who prove,
Possessors of a perfect love ; (a)
And God has promis'd from all sin (b)
To make his faithful children clean : 1675
How comes it then, my friend, that you,
This matter dares attempt to shew
In such a mean unworthy view ?
For is not that foul monster sin,
That vile abominable thing, 1680

(x) Gen. vi. 9. Job i. 1. 8. and ii. 3. (y) Matt. v. 48.
(z) Heb. vi. 1. Phil. iii. 13, 14. &c. (a) 1 John iv. 17.
18. (b) Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. 29.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 47

'Gainst which God's anger ne'er abateth,
And which he tells us his soul hateth? (c)

Now do you think, my friend, that God
Wants power to make his promise good?
Or do you think he wants the will 1685
To rid us of this fatal ill?
Or why do you so much reflect on
That frequent scripture-phrase *perfection*?

J A M E S.

I don't dislike it, (Jemmy says,)
As 'tis, my friend, a scripture-phrase; 1690
But only as those folks and you,
Place it in an erroneous view.
Bible-perfection, as I take it,
And as I think the scriptures make it;
Is neither more nor less than this, 1695
Sincerity; for no man is
Able while he remaineth in
The body, to live free from sin.
It is not possible to do
The Lord's commandments here below; 1700
Neither by nature's strength ('tis clear,)
Nor any grace received here; (d)
No, the best deeds of the best men
Are vile, polluted, and unclean;
Nor can the greatest saint, you see, 1705
Keep God's commandments perfectly;
But daily, (spite of all his heed,)
Doth break them, in thought, word, and deed.

R I C H A R D.

Then what becomes of sin, my friend?
If we must keep it to the end; 1710
Or what becomes of them who have it?
For surely heav'n will ne'er receive it;
We must a separation prove
From sin, or ne'er can dwell above;

(c) Jer. xliv. 4. (d) See the Assembly's larger Catechism.

The

48 A MODERN FAMILIAR

The Holy-Ghost says, Nought unclean 1715
 That holy place can enter in, (e)
 And the same spirit tells us too,
 As the tree falls, it lieth so, (f)
 And must for ever, for we have
 No work or knowledge in the grave. (g) 1720
 Then, what, my friend, becomes of sin?
 Or when, or where, are we made clean?
 Do you believe the Romish story
 Of a refining purgatory?
 Or think you we may enter in 1725
 To heav'n, with some degree of sin?

J A M E S.

No, Dick, a Calvinist allows,
 As taking down the leprous house,
 Was a sufficient means to be,
 To cleanse it of its leprosy, (h) 1730
 With sin 'tis just the very same,
 In taking down this mortal frame,
 And when we die, we then shall be
 Cleansed from our iniquity.

R I C H A R D.

Is this the case that we are in 1735
 (Says Dick,) and must the monster sin
 Ev'n to the last within us lurk,
 And death perform the mighty work?

J A M E S.

No, death perform the work, Dick, no;
 You did not hear me, friend, say so; 1740
 The work belongs to God alone;
 But then he does it, Dick, for none,
 Until that awful hour when death
 Deprives them of their latest breath.

(e) Rev. xxi. 27. (f) Eccles. xi. 3. (g) Eccles. ix. 10. (h)
 Lev. xiv. 45.

R I C H A R D.

R I C H A R D.

Your proposition wants a leg, 1745
 (Says Dick,) you here the question beg;
 You take for granted, they deny
 That none are cleansed till they die;
 Where can you from the scripture shew
 What you've asserted to be true? 1750
 For I see nought whereon to fix it,
 As yet, but your own *ipse dixit*.

J A M E S.

Says James, how foolishly you speak?
 Constant experience proves it, Dick;
 Where, neighbour, did you ever see 1755
 A saint from iniquity free?

R I C H A R D.

Nay, nay, I tell you (Dick exclaims,)
 This is to beg the question, James;
 For as I said before we're told
 Of several perfect men of old; 1760
 And 'mongst these Methodists you know,
 There are profess perfection too;
 And tho' you say perfection be
 No more than true sincerity,
 You've proved nought, but what you wanted 1765
 You still have boldly ta'en for granted;
 And some things said, which I can name,
 Wherein I think you're much to blame.

By nature first you said, you know,
 We ne'er the will of God could do; } 1770
 This for a truth, James, I allow.

But then you said in the next place,
 We ne'er could do it, ev'n by grace!
 (A wicked saying this of thine
 Against the pow'r of grace divine!) 1775
 And the best deeds, of the best men
 You said were filthy and unclean:
 Now, tho' I grant that no one can,
 Consider'd as a nat'ral man,

Do

50 A MODERN FAMILIAR

Do one religious action right; 1780
 Yet surely by God's grace he might!
 Is that believing, which God faith
 Is precious, (i) a polluted faith?
 Are all those works defil'd with sin,
 Which God's own spirit works within! (j) 1785
 And if such works were filthy, wou'd
 The Lord himself pronounce them good? (k)
 Sure James, on second thoughts, you'll not
 Brand *real* good works with such a blot.
 This subject of good works has been 1790
 Set in the fairest light I've seen
 By Fletcher, in the books he names
 Checks against Antinomians, James. (l)

J A M E S.

Fletcher! aye Fletcher, Dick! his scheme—

R I C H A R D.

Fletcher! why prithee what of him, 1795
 Says Dick, do you know aught, my lad
 Of him, that's foolish, weak, or bad?

J A M E S.

Weak! aye, I know enough that's weak,
 (Says James) I can assure you, Dick;
 Bad! aye, he's brought as many new 1800
 Erroneous doctrines out to view,
 As Wesley, Dick, with all his whim
 Would ne'er have thought of but for him;
 He's but a limb of the old clan,
 He's an apostate wicked man. (m) 1805

R I C H A R D.

Confound your pride and your ill-nature,
 You slandering back-biting creature;

(i) 2 Peter i. 1. (j) Isaiah xxvi. 12. (k) Mark xiv. 6. and many other places. (l) See the 4th Check to Antinomianism, Letter the 8th. (m) This the Author himself heard a Calvinist Minister declare,

(Says

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 51

(Says Dick, in accent sharp and rough,)
 Dick now was in a mighty huff;
 I know the man myself to be 1810
 Remarkable for piety;
 But be they who or what they will,
 If I approve, you slander still;
 Nor can I mention one, but you
 Abuse and brand them black and blue; 1815
 What can detraction, James, avail?
 You can do nought but scold and rail;
 Well may these servants of the Lord,
 Take the good comfort of this word;
 When all men vilify your names, 1820
 (Ev'n *good men* not excepted, James;)
 And cast them out as vile and bad;
 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad;
 For so we're by the scriptures told,
 They stigmatiz'd the saints of old. (n) 1825

J A M E S.

Nay, hold, says James, object I must;
 Your observation is not just;
 We make no opposition to
 These men, for any good they do;
 But for the monstrous errors, Dick, 1830
 They plead for: Richard, answer'd quick:

R I C H A R D.

The very tale which once was told
 By Pharisees, to Christ of old!
 We stone thee not for working good
 (Said they,) but for blaspheming God. (o) 1835
 Hail, Wesley! Fletcher! Sellon! hail!
 Still may the truths you teach prevail;
 And tho' you still in Calvin's schools,
 May pass for knaves, as well as fools;
 May heav'n still strengthen you to bear, 1840
 The haughty look, the scornful sneer;
 The proud disdain, the noisy peal;
 The fierce contempt, the bitter zeal; The

(n) Matt. v. 23. Luke vi. 22, 23. John x. 33.

The pious gibe, th' important huff;
 The public taunt, the private scoff; 1845
 Sarcastic joke, satyric song;
 The laughing wit, the scandalous tongue;
 By many so profusely giv'n
 To you, till all-impartial heav'n
 Your patient suff'rings shall regard, 1850
 And crown you with a full reward.
 Still against rampant error fight;
 Drag out the fiend to open light;
 Whatever plea the monster make,
 No respite grant, no pity take; 1855
 Pursue him close, thro' all his maze
 Of doubling shifts, and winding ways;
 Nor ever be induced by
 The loud, but falsely-pious cry,
 And clamours of mistaken men, 1860
 To screen black error in his den;
 By any boon the monster claims,
 From learned, or from pious names;
 Or any plea which may arise,
 From sacred friendship's stronger ties. 1865
 Ne'er dread the issue of the fight,
 For truth can bear the keenest light;
 Nor yet be frightened with the roar
 Of baleful error's adverse pow'er;
 Tho' T-pl-dy the war commence, 1870
 (That first-born son of impudence!)
 And in the monster's cause engage,
 And bully, bluster, foam and rage;
 Tho' high-born, self-important H—ll,
 With pride of calvinistic zeal, 1875
 For want of better weapons, fight
 With scorn, contempt, reproach, and spite;
 And compass you on ev'ry side,
 With laughter, and disdainful pride;
 With this and that poor story rail, 1880
 Of bathing tub, or comet-tail;
 Atho' young R-wl-nd join the fight,
 (The lad 'tis likely thinks he's right;)

With

With right good will, throw in his weights,
And talk at a surprising rate; 1885
Their weapons, (which you need not fear,)
Drop harmless, like old Priam's spear. (p)

Too long has error roam'd our strand,
And foam'd a torrent thro' the land;
Poor simple souls deceiv'd too long, 1890
With self-election's syren-song;
Too long been skreen'd from hate and shame,
Behind the gospel's sacred name;
And Calvin's narrow system been
By pious, but mistaken men, 1895
As genuine gospel-truth, too long
Obtruded on th' unwary throng.

Then nobly dare the adverse bands,
And still from your experienc'd hands,
May the keen shafts of truth be sped, 1900
And strike prevailing error dead.
Nor mind th' obstructions in your way,
Or what detracting people say;
" For let your foes discharge their tongues,
" In venom till they burst their lungs; 1905
" Their utmost malice cannot make
" Your head, or tooth, or finger ake;
" Or spoil your shape, distort your face,
" Or put one feature out of place;
" Nor will you find your credit sink, 1910
" By what they say, or what they think; (q)
" Nor can ten hundred thousand lies,
" Make you less pious, learn'd, or wise;

(p) *Telum imbellę sine ictu
Conjecit; rauco quod protenus ære repulsum;
Et summo clypei nequicquam umbone perpendit.*

VIRG.

This said, his feeble hand a javelin threw,
Which flutt'ring, seem'd to loiter as it flew:
Just, and but barely, to the mark it held,
And faintly tinkl'd on the brazen shield.

DRYDEN.

(q) Not universally by far; partially they may.

F

" The

"The most effectual way to baulk
 "Their malice is—to let them talk." (r) 1915

But this, my friend, is all digression,
 About these folks and their profession;
 Come, since these Methodists must all
 To their own master stand or fall;
 Of them let's drop our long debate, 1920
 And leave it him to judge their state,
 Who rightly praises, rightly blames,
 And judges righteous judgment, James.

JAMES.

With all my heart, says James, come then
 We'll drop our talk about these men; 1925
 But see, the skies begin to low'r,
 And seem to bring a heavy show'r;
 What think you; had we best retire,
 And sit beside my parlour fire?

Richard directly gave assent; 1930
 So up they got, away they went;
 To Jemmy's house they quickly come,
 And take possession of the room
 He spoke of, and when seated there,
 A silver mug of better beer 1935
 Is brought by Bridget, Jemmy's maid;
 Talking you know's a thirsty trade.

Now reader, here there will be need
 To make remark e'er we proceed,
 That sev'ral neighbours, staunch and hearty, 1940
 Far as they knew, to Jemmy's party;
 As William, Robert, George, and Jo,
 Besides a plain old wife or two;
 Who having heard, on some occasion,
 Of Dick and Jemmy's conversation; 1945
 Had one by one together come,
 Into one corner of the room,
 Where James and Richard sat, that they
 Might see the issue of the fray,
 And hear what Dick had got to say. } 1950

(r) Swift.

Here

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 55

Here then we'll leave them, list'ning close,
And now attend again to those
Who spoke before, and hear what they
May on the subject further say.

Well, after Here's to thee, and that 1955
They'd had some homely common chat,
And quench'd their thirst with Jemmy's ale,
Dick thus resum'd his former tale.

R I C H A R D.

Come, James, as in your house together
We're shelter'd from the show'ry weather; 1960
We'll now our former theme attend.

I do not like your system, friend;
I hate your absolute-election,
As much as you dislike perfection;
Not only as I cannot find 1965
Aught in my bible of the kind;
(According to the view of things,
Which my best understanding brings;)
But too from this consideration,
It must imply like reprobation; 1970
That dreadful weight, which hangs upon
Your system, like a pond'rous stone!

J A M E S.

A fig for your disapprobation,
And your bugbear of reprobation,
(Says Jemmy,) you election hate! 1975
I make no wonder, man, of that;
Your carnal hearts will always peak
And heave against this doctrine, Dick;
Your legal aims that soar so high,
And fain would have a hand i'th' pye, 1980
It baulks, and well may nature chide,
It mortifies its working-pride:
Nor can it, Richard, be deny'd
The doctrine of predestination,
Gives the *whole* glory of salvation, 1985

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To free, discriminating grace;
 Puts finners in their proper place;
 To merit gives a mortal blow,
 And lays their free-will-glory low;
 Gives them their indefert to see, 1990
 And makes them cry, Why me! why me!
 And wonder that electing grace
 Would chuse such wretches, so that was
 Your judgment in a right direction,
 You ne'er would fight against election; 1995
Election, Dick, is the foundation, (*f*)
 The very ground-work of salvation;
 And those that—

R I C H A R D.

—Hold, says Dick, I pray;
 Do you consider what you say?
 Your words I deem of small avail, 2000
 The scriptures tell another tale;
 If we may credit these, they say;
 Other foundation none can lay,
 Nor other ground-work can be made,
 Than that which is already laid; 2005
 And that is not *election*, James,
 But Jesus Christ the honour claims. (*t*)
 And James, if your predestination,
 Gives the whole glory of salvation
 As you pretend, to God, why so 2010
 To balance that, it gives him too,
 Upon your plan of reprobation,
 The *whole* dishonour of damnation!
 And while the sinner sinks, to be
 Tormented to eternity, } 2015
 He too may cry, Why me! why me!
 A dreadful shocking *why me*, this!
 Which ne'er the less offensive is
 To God's impartiality,
 His justice, love, veracity; 2020

(*f*) This the Author has heard asserted from the pulpit. See also, Elisha Coles on God's sovereignty, p. 39. And Mr. R. Hill's friendly remarks, p. 19. (*t*) 1 Cor. iii. xi.

Than,

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 57

Than, neighbour Jemmy, your *Why me*,
 T' his holiness and equity.
 I never hear some well-known names,
 Express this foolish saying, James;
 But strait methinks I hear and see, 2025
 The self-elected pharisee,
 Walk to the holy temple, then
 Thank God he's not as other men; (*u*)
 No, not as that poor publican,
 That pass'd by, reprobated man! 2030
 O! James, while thus you seek a place,
 T' admit your spurious free-grace;
 You father ev'ry sinner's death,
 On the most barbarous free-wrath!
 Of carnal-hearts, you talk beside; 2035
 Merit, free-will, and working-pride:
 As for those common-place objections,
 I can supply you with directions,
 Where you may see them all look'd thro',
 And find them clearly answer'd too. 2040
 Read Fletcher's checks; mark well his thesis;
 You'll find them heart-broke all to pieces.

J A M E S.

Alas! alas! (says James,) how blind
 Are you, and others of your mind!
 You quote the scriptures by piece-meal, 2045
 And what you like not you conceal;
 I wonder much such folks as you,
 Such pride and vanity can shew;
 And with such freedom dare to speak,
 Of things beyond your knowledge, Dick. 2050
 Read, read the word of God, and pray,
 And then, perhaps, the spirit may
 Shew you the genuine gospel-way. }
 I pity, friend, your weakness, much,
 And greatly could desire that such 2055
 As you, with modesty would speak,
 Of those deep gospel-doctrines, Dick.

(*u*) Luke xviii. 11. &c.

Election, (Richard,) to salvation;
 Is call'd in scripture, God's foundation;
 And men, they tell us too in brief, 2060
 Are damn'd for sin, and unbelief;
 So that if our objectors wou'd
 Take with them the whole word of God;
 They soon would cease t' oppose our way
 And own the truth of all we say. 2065
 This weakness all your schemes attend;
 You take the word by halves, my friend;
 You dabble in the scriptures, Dick,
 And here and there a sentence pick
 You think will serve your turn, and then 2070
 Presume t' oppose much wiser men.

R I C H A R D.

How, dabble, dabble! (Dick exclaims,)
 Why, dabble in the scriptures, James?
 Would you look well, you'd find it true,
 These people dive as deep as you 2075
 In scripture-knowledge, aye, and go
 Perhaps herein, beyond you too.

Where is election to salvation,
 Call'd in the scripture God's foundation?
 The words you hint at, James, are those 2080
 Of Paul to Timmy (*v*) I suppose;
 Which text has just as much to do,
 With your election, James, I trow,
 As that of Poland's Monarch, or
 That of a German Emperor. (*w*) 2085
 Election, if they mean at all,
 'Tis that which is conditional,
 As from the words which follow there, (*x*)
 Will plain to any one appear.

You say too, men for unbelief, 2090
 Are sentenc'd to eternal grief,

(*v*) 2 Tim. ii. 19. (*w*) See Mr. Sellon's answer to Coles's sovereignty, p. 37. (*x*) Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity, and v. 21. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 59

If this be so, (as sure it is,)
 For both saint John and Mark say this; (y)
 It follows, there was something then
 Which these same reprobated men, 2095
 Ought, while in life, to have receiv'd,
 And as a saving truth believ'd:
 But what truth? why the truth and grace }
 Peculiar to their state and case: } 2100
 For ev'ry soul in ev'ry place.
 This way, or that receives a call,
 To turn from sin and live, (z) and all
 Beneath the *christian* dispensation,
 Ought to possess this firm persuasion;
 That Jesus Christ the saviour came 2105
 From heav'n, and liv'd, and dy'd for *them*.
 But is this fact? did Jesus give
 Himself for *them*, that they might live?
 If not, they then are doom'd to die,
 For not believing of a lie. 2110
 But this must needs be false, for Paul
 Affures us, Jesus dy'd for all; (a)
 If so, he needs must die for them,—

J A M E S.

For all! how dy'd for all? (says Jem.)
 How comes it then, if Christ was giv'n 2115
 For all, all are not brought to heav'n?

R I C H A R D.

Himself James, shall the answer give;
 "Ye *will not* come to me and live; (b)
 "Ev'n as the hen with kindness brings
 "Her tender chicks beneath her wings, 2120
 (And mark her kind concern, and see
 With what a dear affection she
 Collects her wand'ring progeny!) }
 "So wand'ring souls, I often wou'd
 "Have gather'd in your souls to God, 2125

(y) John iii. 18. Mark xvi. 16. (z) Acts xiv. 17. Rom. i.
 19. 20. (a) John xii. 32. Rom. v. 18. Heb. ii. 9. 2
 Cor. v. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 6. &c. (b) John v. 40.

"That

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" That you might life and heav'n have got,
 " And happy been ; but ye would not." (c)
 God operates, my friend, on none
 As if he were a stock or stone ;
 He treats us not as mere machines ; } 2130
 But still adapts the ways and means }
 Of our recovery from our sins,
 Unto our state and case, as creatures
 Possess of reasonable natures.
 He treats us as free-agents, then ; 2135
 Not, James, as mere machines, but men.
 For Jesus Christ was never giv'n,
 To drag some neck-and-heels to heav'n ;
 And take the rest of those that fell,
 And cast them neck-and-heels to hell. 2140
 No, no, my friend, 'tis plain to see,
 Our will is unconstrain'd and free ;
 God tells us so himself ; his voice
 Leaves good and ill to our own choice,
 And lovingly invites us still, 2145
 To chuse the good, and leave the ill. (d)

J A M E S.

Says James, you keep a mighty noise,
 About free-agency and choice ;
 I cannot, Dick, your scheme endure,
 Not I, indeed ; of this I'm sure, 2150
 If ever grace save me from hell,
 It must be irresistible ;
 This, neighbour, I can clearly see,
 None else will e'er avail for me.

R I C H A R D.

You talk you know not what (says Dick) 2155
 Nor do I heed a word you speak,
 Without good proof for what you say ;
 And that you will not find to day ;
 I'm apt to think, for this assertion,
 Of irresistible conversion. 2160

(c) Luke xiii. 34. (d) Deut. xxx. 15. 19.

J A M E S.

J A M E S.

But, Dick (says James) you're strangely blind,
 To think that *all*, means *all mankind*;
 The greatest writers of our sect,
 Assert it means *all the elect*;
 And sometimes all of worldly-mind, 2165
 But that it ne'er means all mankind,
 In any part of revelation,
 Where 'tis connected with salvation.

R I C H A R D.

Aye, aye, (says Dick) you need not tell,
 Their comments, James, I know them well; 2170
 I know your party "can with ease (*e*)
 "Twist words and meanings as they please;"
 Yes, yes, I know, their wise comment,
 Can find out meanings never meant,
 And quite invert a word's intent. } 2175
 In scripture, James, where *all* you'll find,
 Refers in gen'ral to mankind,
 It *only* does two meanings bear;
 The one, means all men, ev'ry where; (*f*)
 The other, that large part of men, 2180
 Involv'd in wickedness and sin; (*g*)
 But that it ever means those few,
Alone, there call'd believers, you
 I think, my friend, can never shew. }
 But if your wretched scheme require, 2185
 Poor *all* must pass the tort'ring fire;
All must mean *some*, or *some* mean *all*;
 And if your needy system call,
 Good sense and logic both must fall!
 Yet, James, you can't, with all you say, 2190
 Quite drive the genuine sense away;
All sure, was ne'er design'd t' express,
 Of numbers great and small, the *less*;
 "My logic sure has lost its aim,"
 If *all* and *few* be just the *same*! 2195

(*e*) Gay. (*f*) Rom. v. 18. And many other places. (*g*)
 1 John v. 19. &c.

None

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None, Jemmy, but designing men,
Would so ridiculous be seen,
To force a meaning on the word,
So false, so palpably absurd !

J A M E S.

Dear Dick, you quite mistake the mark, 2200
(Says James,) you're blind or very dark ;
All your objections nought besteads you ;
Your carnal-reason quite misleads you ;
I wish you better understood,
The sov'reign truths and grace of God. 2205

R I C H A R D.

I thank you, James, so far as you
(Says Richard,) have my good in view ;
But yet, by your good leave, I will
Retain my carnal-reas'nings still,
At least till you can recommend, 2210
Your spiritual-reas'nings better, friend.
But I perceive you mount amain,
To your important airs again ;
Truly, my friend, I think indeed,
That nothing surely can exceed, 2215
The vanity of most Calvinians,
In speaking of their own opinions.
Do but observe th' assured air,
With which their doctrines they declare ;
As if deceiv'd they could not be, 2220
But shar'd infallibility
Among themselves ; observe, beside,
With what contemptuous sneering pride,
The self-important vain Calvinian,
Pretends to pity the Arminian ; 2225
As one of dark beclouded mind,
As carnal, full of pride, and blind.
In what authoritative strain
They give their counsel, mark again ;
You're blind, say they, and none can right } 2230
Your erring mind, or clear your sight,
But he that sits enthron'd in light ; } And

And therefore your best way will be,
To read the word attentively ;
Pray earnestly, and who can say, 2235
But God may make your darkness day.

Now if you turn the tables here,
And tell them, ' Friends it don't appear,
' To me, my system is untrue ;
' I read the word as well as you, 2240
' I often pray, and yet am quite
' Convinc'd, you're wrong, and I am right ;
' But I can with your weakness bear ;
' My pity for you is sincere ;
' And as the spirit only can 2245
' Instruct benighted erring man ;
' I recommend it to your care,
' To read the word with fervent pray'r ;
' Who knows but then the king of kings,
' May let you see the truth of things.' 2250

I say if thus of them you speak,
As dark, erroneous, blind and weak,
And in their own dogmatic strain,
Return their counsel back again ;
They stand amaz'd ! and think you grown, 2255
The proudest mortal ever known !
What ! you audaciously presume,
To cast your censure upon them !
And speak in terms that must infer,
The knowing Calvinist may err ! 2260
And represent the num'rous throng,
Of orthodox professors wrong !

'Tis arrogance beyond compare ;
'Tis insolence too great to bear !
Yet why, my friend, I think we cou'd 2265
Produce as pious, wise, and good,
Professing men among th' Arminians,
As e'vn the best among Calvinians ;
Men, eminent for parts and place,
And ev'ry genuine christian grace ; 2270
Men who have known the word of truth,
Like Timothy, (b) from early youth ; Who

(b) 2 Tim. iii. 15.

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Who read it still, who watch and pray,
 And closely walk in wisdom's way ;
 And will you, Jemmy, dare to say,
 That God is now so partial grown,
 As by his spirit to teach none
 The truth, and save from false opinions,
 But those call'd orthodox Calvinians ?
 If so I pity and deride,
 Your folly, vanity, and pride. 2275 2280

Here, reader, turn we to the folk,
 We left in the aforefaid nook ;
 For Dick's part of the conversation,
 Had put them all in agitation ;
 Jo. shook his head, look'd grave, and sigh'd,
 Billy a sacred text apply'd,
 And poor old Nanny almost cry'd,
 To see poor Dick, so blind, as they
 Were in their wisdom pleas'd to say. 2285 2290

Well, being all quite full of matter,
 But thinking that too great a clatter,
 Might discompose their friends, they got
 Up from their place, that they might not
 Disturb their neighbours with their hum,
 And walk'd into another room ;
 Where after frequent hums and haws,
 And some important see's and saw's,
 'Twixt George, Jo. Will. Bob. Mary, Nan,
 The following dialogue began. 2295 2300

M A R Y.

O friends ! I'm struck with deep amaze ;
 What shocking things this Richard says !
 Indeed, indeed ! I scarce can bear,
 Such daring blasphemy to hear !
 With what contempt, and scorn, and hate,
 Of Gospel-doctrines does he prate ;
 It would be mighty happy, if
 The Lord would e'er be pleas'd to give
 This empty, forward, carnal youth,
 A clearer notion of the truth. 2310

WILLIAM.

W I L L I A M.

Says Will, judge gently as you can ; }
 (Observe, Will, was a candid man ; }
 And candid too, was honest Nan.) }
 For tho' tis much to be deplor'd,
 He's such wrong notions of the word ; 2315
 Yet, for all that, I think he may
 Not altogether miss the way ;
 Many, like him, for error pleads,
 Whose hearts are better than their heads.

A N N.

Aye, aye, (says Nanny,) you say right ; 2320
 Dick only wants a clearer light ;
 I know myself some of th' opinion,
 Our brethren call, I think, Arminian,
 Who, it is plain enough to see,
 Are notable for piety ; 2325
 Nor do I doubt at all, but they
 Will be found safe i'th reck'ning day.

R O B E R T.

I know not that, because they rob
 God of his glory, (answer'd Bob ;) 2330
 Ascribing to their own free-will,
 The honour of salvation still ;
 And slander too, in ev'ry place,
 The doctrines of free, sov'reign grace ;
 I think if such from wrath be freed,
 It must be as by fire indeed. (p) 2335

J O S E P H.

Indeed I like not Dick, (says Jo,) }
 He talks against our doctrines so ; }
 And if he may be fav'd or no, }
 While in this mind, is to my thought,
 A matter of no little doubt ; 2340
 I think, like Nicodemus, he
 Full of head-knowledge seems to be ;

(p) 1 Cor. iii. 15.

G

And

66 A MODERN FAMILIAR

And this I fear is all, indeed
I would not choose to stand in 's stead,
For tho' he serious seem, and thoughtful, 2345
I think his case is very doubtful.

G E O R G E.

How doubtful, Jo? (George made reply,)
If Dick, my friend, should live and die,
In this erroneous persuasion,
He would be sure to share damnation; 2350
Dick's blunders are not so and so,
But fundamental errors, Jo,
And as thou say'st, I think indeed,
All his religion lies in 's head;
He keeps a noise, nay sometimes, Jo, 2355
Pretends to quote the scripture too;
But truly, friends, I think that he
A wild expositor would be;
He's full of idle empty chat,
And talks about he knows not what. 2360

M A R Y.

Aye, aye, (with a deep heavy groan,
Says Mary, in a canting tone,
Shaking her head with solemn air;)
Dick talks, and talks, and makes a fair
Pretence, as tho' he something knew, 2365
But all, I fear, is empty shew.

W I L L I A M.

Nay, Mary, (interrupted Will,)
You will be judging Richard still;
We ought not to decide so near,
In things that lie beyond our sphere; 2370
We cannot see the inward part,
For God alone, can know the heart.
If, as I hope he is, he be
Possess of genuine piety;
Tho' in some things he think amiss, 2375
Yet God, in time, may shew him this;
Let's

Let's hope the best ; for aught I hear,
 Dick bears an honest character ;
 Both for good sense, sobriety,
 For quietness, and piety. 2380

M A R Y.

'Tis all hypocrisy and pride,
 (Mary with zealous warmth reply'd,)
 I've known e'er now when he's been found,
 Dancing upon the devil's ground,
 At wakes, and feasts, and fairs, among 2385
 The thickest of the carnal throng.

W I L L I A M.

That may be too (says Will,) but what
 Would you, my friend, infer from that ?
 A man may rise and fall, 'tis plain,
 And rise, and fall, and rise again. 2390
 Judge as severely as you can,
 'Tis settled habit shews the man.
 Has Dick walk'd always thus contrary ?
 Is it his constant practice, Mary ?
 Perhaps when all the truth appears, 2395
 It has been once in twice seven years ;
 O Mary ! were *you* search'd to th' quick,
 As narrowly as you search Dick ;
 'Tis like you never would be known,
 To cast at Dick another stone. (q) 2400
 Now when Dick has o'ertaken been,
 If you had happen'd to have seen,
 Or to his closet laid your ear,
 'Tis like you might have heard him there,
 (Like Peter, when he'd curs'd and swore,) (r) 2405
 His sinfulness bewailing sore.
 It is the likelier to be so,
 As I myself, for certain, know,
 His gen'ral walk has blameless been ;
 For I have Richard's conduct seen, 2410

(q) John viii. 7. 9. (r) Matt. xxvi. 74.

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And been acquainted with him too,
Much more than any one of you.

G E O R G E.

'Pshaw Will, (says George,) all that
may be, }
What does it signify to see } 2415
Some scraps of poor morality?
Richard, you see, maintaineth, Will,
His dang'rous, damning errors still;
And truly I can never find,
While he remains so dark and blind,
That e'er his moral conduct can, 2420
Arise from a good bottom, man.
His conduct else I own is free
From grosser immorality;
He's of a studious turn I know,
Reads much; talks well; and so, and so; } 2425
I've heard him pretty subtly too,
Defend the sentiments he stood for;
And this I think is all he's good for.
However I will not assert
But that God may the man convert; 2430
And give this muddy-headed youth,
Before he dies to see the truth;
But in these errors if he fell,
He would be sure to go to hell.

A N N.

So, so! so, so! (cries honest Nan, 2435
Who was much mov'd to hear the man;)
O George! you're sadly too severe;
It shocks me dreadfully, to hear
You doom the man to hell, for shame,
I'm sure, my friend, you're much to blame. 2440
I always thought the number few,
That in a comparative view,
Would finally be sav'd by grace;
For so the bible plainly says; (f)

(f) Matt. vii. 14.

But

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 69

But if all those who to the end, 2445
 Think not exact as we do, friend,
 Must be at last by heav'n rejected,
 'Twill be much less than I expect d.
 But to this thought I can't give place;
 This cannot, surely, be the case; 2450
 You should not, George, so rashly strike;
 We cannot all think just alike;
 We should not thus judge one another;
 You're too uncharitable, brother;
 Tho' Dick think wrong in some things, what, 2455
 He may be fav'd at last for that.

G E O R G E.

Nanny, you do not understand
 (Says George,) the point we have in hand;
 Nor in this case what's right and fit;
 Your charity outruns your wit; 2460
 Dick quite subverts upon his plan,
 The leading gospel-doctrines, Nan;
 And in this case, how he can be
 In a safe state I cannot see.

A N N.

You cannot see! that may be too, 2465
 We all are fallible you know;
 'Tis possible that we may be
 In some things wrong as well as he;
 But let all this be as it may,
 I must, George, still both think and say, 2470
 While Richard's life productive is
 O' th' genuine fruits of righteousness,
 If death this hour his lot should be,
 (Tho' some things he can't rightly see,) }
 He would be fav'd eternally. } 2475
 And George, if you imagine yet,
 My charity outruns my wit,
 It seems, I think, as plain to me,
 Your wit outruns your charity,

70 A MODERN FAMILIAR

And sadly too, when to damnation,
You send a man for his persuasion. 2480

W I L L I A M.

Aye, aye, (says Will,) I'm much inclin'd
To be of our friend Nanny's mind ;
I think, George, you and Mary are
Too rigid and censorious far ; 2485
Dick's little slips and faults you 'spy,
With a severe and partial eye ;
And descant upon his demerit,
With an unkind unloving spirit ;
You're too much prejudic'd I see, 2490
To judge with strict propriety,
Of Richard's actions, or allow,
With candour, what you ought to do.
Come, come, my keen Remarkers, come,
And let us be severe at home ; 2495
Look each impartially within,
And trace our own besetting sin ;
What tho' we each of us may be
Clear of the failings which we see,
In Richard, yet 'tis like we may 2500
Be twice as bad another way.
I always think, my friend, that they
Who find so very much to say,
Of others failings, and contemn,
Judge, rail, sneer, censure, and condemn ; 2505
'Tis a shrewd sign they ne'er were taught
To know their own hearts as they ought ;
For if they were, we soon should see,
They would more soft and candid be ;
O ! would we with that rule comply, 2510
To do, as we would be done by ; (t)
What loving doings would there be,
From what, alas ! we daily see.
My friends, let us be cautious, then,
In speaking far of other men ; 2515

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 71

Or being too positive, always
 Rememb'ring what the Saviour says ;
 That from our judge we shall receive, (u)
 Such measure as to them we give.
 I really think did Dick but hear, 2520
 A genuine gospel-minister ;
 And would but constantly attend,
 Where gospel-truths are preach'd, my friend ;
 Was this the case, I think the youth,
 Would soon be brought to see the truth ; 2525
 For Dick has sense enough, I know,
 And I assure you, good sense too.

R O B E R T.

Where, Will, (says Bob,) does Dick attend?

W I L L I A M.

The Methodists, I think, my friend,
 (Says William,) in a common way, 2530
 As I have heard our neighbours say.

R O B E R T.

The Methodists, Will ! aye, that breed !
 I think he's good to please, indeed !
 I wonder he will look so low
 And mean, as after them to go ; 2535
 I know was I as Dick, my friend,
 Such runagates I'd ne'er attend.

J O S E P H.

Aye, runagates indeed, says Jo ;
 I think about three years ago,
 One afternoon I chanc'd to be 2540
 Where Wesley was to preach at three ;
 So, Robert, thought I, if I can,
 I'll stay myself and hear the man.
 Well, so I did ; but had you been
 Upon the place yourself, and seen, 2545
 What swarms of simple folk there came,
 To hear this man of mighty fame ;

(u) Matt. vii. 2.

To

72 A MODERN FAMILIAR

To see them throng, and croud, and strive;
 'Twould have disgusted aught alive!
 They come, run, run; and sweat and blow; 2550
 Press near; down on their knees they bow;
 Peep in their hats; then gape, and stare,
 As if some little God was there!

R O B E R T.

It is surprizing, Jo, to see,
 Folks can so weak and foolish be; 2555
 'Tis really quite disgusting too,
 To see these silly people, Jo,
 Revere and idolize him so. }
 He's like (when he's been some time fro' em)
 A kind of yearly wonder to 'em; 2560
 And tho' they oft have seen the man,
 And heard him o'er and o'er again;
 Yet ev'ry time he comes his round,
 Th' enthusiasts still the same are found!
 They run! and he's a wonder still! 2565
 Just like the man on Beacon-hill; (v)
 Where numbers throng and make ado,
 About they scarce know what or who.

J O S E P H.

Tho' your comparison be rough
 (Says Joseph,) yet 'tis apt enough; 2570
 For any gain they've got who've seen them,
 I think there's little choice between them;
 We may, I think, well term them brothers,
 For any good they do to others.

G E O R G E.

Aye, Jo, the observation you 2575
 Have made, (says George,) is very true;

(v) This refers to the man hung in chains for murder on Beacon-hill near Halifax; and as great numbers of people ran to see him, Mr. —, a Calvinist minister well known to the author, lately made this kind and elegant comparison, between *them* and the *silly* people that *run* to hear Mr. Wesley preach.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 73

But Jo, if you observe and look,
 They're mostly poor, mean, beggary folk;
 Their preachers too are such a crew
 Of riff-raff fellows, Jo, as you 2580
 Ne'er saw; as cobblers, colliers too,
 Poor husband-men, and barbers, who
 Talk so much nonsense in their teaching
 It don't deserve the name of preaching;
 They're such a despicable breed, 2585
 My ears would burn upon my head,
 To come among them; or be seen
 Near such enthusiastic men;
 Few folks of credit, Jo, belong them,
 'Tis scandalous to come among them. 2590
 But, neighbour Joseph, did you stay?
 How lik'd you Wesley's preaching, pray? }
 He's a poor tool I've heard them say. }

J O S E P H.

(w) Yes, George, I stay'd among the rest
 To hear their celebrated priest; 2595
 So out o'th' house he comes at last;
 The people croud with eager haste,
 And almost worship as he past. }
 Well; he ascends the pulpit stairs,
 Peeps in his hat and says his pray'rs; 2600
 And then, instead of taking care,
 To make a spiritual solemn pray'r,
 Repeats before th' expecting throng,
 A simple form two minutes long;
 Gives out a hymn; and seems to shew 2605
 Far more concern they sing not true,
 Than for aught else; a text he takes,
 Of which he two divisions makes;

(w) This whole account which Joseph gives of Mr. Wesley, and his sermon, is copied verbatim from an original letter written by the Rev. T——s B——ke, the Calvinist minister at Stockport, in Cheshire, to Mr. Wesley, as near as the verse would admit; however the exact sense and meaning is retained.

But

74 A MODERN FAMILIAR

But seems to heed them, George, no more
 Than if he'd never preach'd before ; 2610
 Tells an old tale ; and then another ;
 Something about his great-grand-mother ;
 This done ; he then proceeds to tell
 How that the founding of a bell,
 Sufficient is, to make the hearer, 2615
 Ev'n of itself a faint for ever !
 This tale he finishes, George ; well,
 The next tale, (horrible to tell !
 O tell it not in Gath that e'er
 One call'd a gospel-minister, 2620
 Should such a shocking tale repeat
 Or ever have believed it.)
 Was of an angel, George, in wrath,
 Throttling a harmless child to death.
 He then proceeds in his oration, 2625
 Says something of justification ;
 And represents God hov'ring o'er
 The people's heads, (as he before
 Had done the comet, which should fall
 He said, to earth and burn us all ;) 2630
 Ready to do, would they but hear,
 Some operation on them there ;
 He then absurdly talks, as they
 Who dead in iniquity lay,
 Could mourn for sin, could deprecate 2635
 God's anger, see their lost estate,
 Bemoan their sinful sad condition,
 And to God's favour seek admission ;
 Desire an int'rest in the Lord,
 And feel his power, and hear his word ! 2640
 Well, now he ceases to exhort,
 (For all he said was very short,
 And I have heard folks say, he's done
 In gen'ral ere he's well begun ;)
 He sings a hymn, a form repeats 2645
 As usual, George, and down he gets.
 To hear the simple things he said,
 And see what bungling work he made ;

To

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 75

To hear such stuff one scarce could bear him,
 Yet see the crouds that came to hear him, 2650
 From all sides round both far and nigh ;
 My indignation rose so high,
 I was resolv'd to write a letter,
 To teach the fumbling fellow better :
 Accordingly when I got home, 2655
 I walk'd into my little room,
 Took pen and ink, and wrote him word,
 His whole proceeding was absurd ;
 Insinuated, that in hope,
 H' aspir'd to be another Pope ; 2660
 Told him, I did expect to hear,
 An able Gospel-minister ;
 Who well had known, before this time,
 To teach us truths the most sublime ;
 But O ! with his poor, weak, disjointed 2665
 Talk, how I was disappointed !
 I told him, " Sir, it nought avails,
 " To tell so many old-wives tales ;
 " Such things can do no farther good,
 " Than to amuse the multitude, 2670
 " And serve their notice to beguile,
 " From what is better worth their while ;
 " Had you not better, if you cou'd,
 " ('Twou'd be more for the people's good,
 " At least if in your pow'r it lies ;) 2675
 " Tell them how JESUS Justifies
 " A sinner in a gospel way ?
 " For this I dare be bold to say ;
 " If something more substantial you
 " Display'd before the people's view ; 2680
 " It might be better for your teachers ;
 " For some whom you set up for preachers,
 " Have not *all* knowledge, Sir, I know."
 Thus, George, did I attempt to show
 This man the faults of his proceeding, 2685
 Would he but give my words the reading.
 Nor did I fail, my friends, to tell
 This Gentleman about the bell,

And

76 A MODERN FAMILIAR

And other foolish observations,
Which he had made in his Orations; 2690
Upon the whole I wrote with fury,
And trim'd him rarely I assure ye;
I quoted latin in my choler,
To let him see I was a scholar;
I thought perhaps it would displease him, 2695
That such a lad as me should teaze him;
And lest my youth the man should shock,
Compar'd myself to Peter's Cock;
For God, (said I,) for ought I know,
May bleſs a *young Cock's* doodle-doo, 2700
And let him see while he is reading,
The vanity of his proceeding;
Then took a copy of my letter,
That I might be provided better;
Of which I likewise sent him word, 2705
And left the issue with the Lord.

G E O R G E.

And pray (says George to Joseph,) friend,
What answer did the fellow send?

J O S E P H.

Why, answer, George; none came from him;
But once in fix or seven months time, 2710
Some fellow (who I cannot name,)
To whom it seems my letter came;
A sawcy, spiteful answer sent; (x)
Said I was weak, and impudent;
And then he kept a mighty clamour, 2715
About wrong spelling, and bad grammar;
And would a quarrel needs be picking,
Because I call'd myself cock-chicken;
Of this George, he a horse-laugh made;
And ridicul'd and sneer'd, and said 2720

(x) Mr. B——k's letter happening to fall into the hands of the author of this essay, he wrote Mr. B——ke an answer to it, to which Joseph in this place refers.

I crew not like a barn-door fowl,
But hooted like a fluttering owl;
Nay, George, you scarce e'er knew a man,
Who wrote in such a spiteful strain.

W I L L I A M.

Truly (says Will.) he serv'd you right; 2725
For, friend, you e'en should have been quiet;
Can you not hear, Jo. and receive
What's right, and what you like not leave?
Or if you needs must something say,
Could you not use a proper way? 2730
Nor have address'd an aged man,
In such a disrespectful strain.
For, let him be what else he wou'd,
His moral character is good;
And in such case there ought to be, 2735
Good manners and civility;
Not sauciness, contempt and rage;
Respect, you know, is due to age.

G E O R G E.

But (interrupted George) my friend,
Did you the man an answer send? 2740

J O S E P H.

Not I; he writ in such a stile,
I did not think it worth my while.

W I L L I A M.

No, really; and the truth to tell,
(Says Will.) it might have been as well,
Had you but thought, it had no more 2745
Deserv'd your time to write before;
I absolutely disapprove,
These scornful taunts, this want of love;
And think my brethren much to blame,
Who indulge this keen ill-natur'd frame; 2750
To laugh at Wesley; taunt his men,
To ridicule their preaching, then

Compare his folks to those who ran
 In throngs to see the hanged man ;
 All such invidious remarks, 2755
 Serve but to wake the sleeping sparks
 Of baneful passions into life ;
 As wrath, resentment, spite and strife ;
 And manifest too plain beside,
 Our own bad hearts and inward pride ; 2760
 If e'er our aims successful prove,
 These people's errors to remove,
 It must, I'm sure, be done by love ; }
 For, Jo. to scold, and sneer, and rail,
 Is never likely to prevail. 2765

A N N.

No, no, (says Nanny) you say right,
 No good can come of scorn and spite ;
 We should, I'm sure, more candid be,
 They've done a deal of good, you see.

G E O R G E.

Of good! (says George) I wonder where, 2770
 Or of what kind, for I could ne'er,
 Discover any good they've done,
 Except it be to make folks run,
 O'er head and ears in error, this
 Indeed is what they seldom miss, 2775
 Their rotten doctrines I detest,
 They're a sad crew, I'm sure, at best ;
 And so, indeed, I've always thought 'em,
 'Tis not worth while to talk about 'em :
 Come, then, my honest neighbours, come, 2780
 'Tis time, high time to think of home ;
 Here then our parley let us end,
 And leave our neighbour with his friend,
 To end their matters as they may.
 Here George got up and walk'd away, 2785
 His neighbours follow'd him,—and here,
 I cannot, reader, well forbear
 Observing ; what a rig'rous doom
 On Dick and Wesley's folks might come, If

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 79

If some folks had it in their power, 2790
 To sentence at their final hour;
 I think indeed, both he and they,
 May very, very justly say,
 'Tis well for them 'midst all their grudges,
 That some of these are not their Judges! 2795
 Here turn we and again attend,
 Dick, and his controverting friend.
 Well, Richard, (after these were gone
 To pass their verdict, pro and con,
 And Dicky's cause amongst them try,) 2800
 Proceeded thus in his reply.

R I C H A R D.

I'll tell you, James, within my mind,
 I've gain'd some knowledge of mankind;
 The diff'rent sects and parties I,
 Have noted with observant Eye; 2805
 And mark'd the doctrines well which each
 Do in their turn for Gospel preach;
 Have well consider'd too the Spirit,
 Which men of diff'rent sects inherit;
 Revolv'd it o'er within my mind, 2810
 And this, James, I in gen'ral find,
 Such is the nature, such the plan,
 Of fall'n, corrupt, ungen'rous man;
 So narrow-soul'd in's fall'n state,
 His love so circumscrib'd and strait, 2815
 Possess'd of such a selfish heart,
 He grudges ev'n the smallest part,
 To others, of the goods or pelf,
 He craves so eagerly himself;
 Yea, was't within his pow'r, he'd dare, 2820
 To hedge around the vital air;
 To Sol claim an exclusive right,
 And make a property of light. (y)

(y) The Author is obliged for several hints here and in the following verses, to Mrs. Rowe, and the Author of the Fool of Quality.

But for religious party men,
 Of all the systems I have seen, 2825
 Amongst the diff'rent sects and names,
 Yours is the most ungenerous, James.
 For Calvin's strait-lac'd saints we find, }
 Would fain engross the blifs design'd } 2830
 For ev'ry sinner of mankind;
 All folks of little selfish minds,
 Some narrow-hearted reason finds,
 The gracious influence to restrain,
 The Saviour did for all obtain;
 Such men, as far as in them lies, 2835
 The Saviour would monopolize;
 Would leave all others in the lurch,
 And shut him up within their church;
 And say to God with shameless brow,
 Thus far, nor farther shalt thou go; 2840
 Meanly they labour to confine,
 That Sun but on a part to shine.
 Which favour'd John, fears not t' avow,
 Lights every man that's born below. (z)
 But why should bold presumptuous man, 2845
 Thus straiten the Almighty's plan?
 Or dare, with impotence of thought,
 Lack-loving mind, and feeble doubt;
 To mark, with his poor scanty line,
 The bounds of clemency divine? 2850
 What tongue, such words as these, shall dare
 With impious vanity declare?
 Here thy exulting waves shall rove, }
 O thou abyfs of sacred love! } 2855
 Thus far, nor farther shall they move.
 To this, and that selected soul,
 Shall thy triumphant billows roll,
 And then retire; nor shall the flood
 Of Jesu's sacred, streaming blood,
 Reach one o'th' reprobated brood. } 2860
 But, O my friend, tis well for us
 Unloving mortals cannot thus,

(z) John i. 9.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 81

Confine the love and grace of God,
 Or limit the atoning blood.
 The spirit of our God we find, 2865
 Is never thus to be confin'd;
 The wind (the Saviour says, you know,) (a)
 Blows when, and where it listeth too;
 But lists to blow, or more, or less,
 O'er all the earth, in ev'ry place; 2870
 And ev'ry soul may hear the sound
 Thereof, that walks upon the ground;
 So, James, the wind of heav'nly grace,
 Listeth to blow or more, or less, }
 On ev'ry soul of Adam's race; } 2875
 It brings to all salvation nigh,
 Nor does it pass one sinner by.

J A M E S.

Why Dick, (says James,) d'ye disapprove
 Our scheme so much, for want of love?
 " May not the sov'reign Lord on high 2880
 " Dispense his favours as he will,
 " Chuse some to life, while others die,
 " And yet be just and gracious still?" (b)

R I C H A R D.

Yes, on Christ's gospel-scheme he can;
 But not upon John Calvin's plan. 2885
 Jesus expects not, 'tis well known,
 To reap, where he has never sown;
 Nor does he only barley sow,
 And then expect that wheat should grow;
 Whatever Calvinists aver, 2890
 Jesus is not a hard, austere,
 Unreasonable master, who
 (Tho' in effect they tell us so,)
 Expects improvement to be made,
 Of talents which we never had! 2895
 No, no; " the sov'reign Lord on high"
 Accepteth us accordingly,

(a) John iii. 8. (b) Dr. Watts.

To those abilities we've got, (c)
 And not to those which we have not.
 Where much is given then of such 2900
 He says he will require much; (d)
 Where he gives little, then of these
 He says, he will require the less;
 But never tells us he will have
 Account for what he never gave. 2905
 Could I, my friend, believe like you,
 Calvinian reprobation true;
 That most are left by heav'nly grace;
 I say, my friend, in such a case,
 Whoe'er upon this shocking plan, 2910
 Could think himself th' unhappy man;
 (As most by far may justly do,
 If Calvin's scheme be really true;)
 In mournful, black, despairing strain,
 I think with justice might complain; 2915
 And this might be in such a state,

T H E

Dreadful Despairing Complaint
of a Calvinian Reprobate.

' A H! woe is me! wretch that I am;
 ' Condemn'd to endless pain & shame; 2920
 ' Undone, alàs! unhappy I,
 ' Ordain'd a living death to die;
 ' In Tophet doom'd my lot to share,
 ' And roll in fi'ry vengeance there;
 ' And in that flaming prison be 2925
 ' Immur'd to all eternity.
 ' ETERNITY! that dreadful sound!
 ' What never ends, nor e'er began;
 ' Enough to fright, distract, confound,
 ' The most unthinking soul of man! 2930

(c) Viz. by his grace. (d) Luke xii. 47, 48.

" Eternity!"

“ Eternity ! that boundless race,
 “ Which time himself can never run,
 “ Swift as he flies with speedy pace,
 “ Which when ten million years are gone;
 “ Is still the same, and still to be begun !” (e) 2935

‘ Since my first wretched breath I drew,
 ‘ No happiness I ever knew (f)
 ‘ Nor ever *could*, upon the plan
 ‘ My wrathful Maker form’d me man ;
 ‘ Nay it appears my angry God, 2940
 ‘ *Design’d* I never, never shou’d ;
 ‘ But from eternity enjoins,
 ‘ (At least from Adam’s fatal loins,)
 ‘ Impell’d by his severe decree, } 2945
 ‘ Whilst here, I *must* a sinner be,
 ‘ Then sink to endless misery.
 ‘ Health, worldly-substance, friends and food,
 ‘ An understanding sound and good ;
 ‘ With various knowledge it may be,
 ‘ Good-nature, generosity, 2950
 ‘ And eloquence, to me are giv’n,
 ‘ By partial and designing heav’n ;
 ‘ Like flow’rs, of old profusely shed
 ‘ On some devoted victim’s head ;
 ‘ Not giv’n me to encrease my gain, 2955
 ‘ Promote my joy, or ease my pain ;
 ‘ But with the cruel dire intent,
 ‘ My deep damna ion to augment ;
 ‘ To sharpen ev’ry pang I feel,
 ‘ And sink me to a deeper Hell ! (g) 2960
 ‘ Less favour I, a wretch can find,
 ‘ Than is indulg’d the brutal kind ;
 ‘ Nay I less mercy ever knew,
 ‘ Than Satan and his rebel-crew ;
 ‘ For these, at first were *happy* made, 2965
 ‘ And each a *perfect* nature had ;

(e) Prior. (f) For there is no peace to the wicked saith my God. Isa. xlviii. 22, and lvii. 21. (g) See Mr. Wesley’s Predestination calmly considered, Sec. 44.

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- ‘ And in their *proper Persons*, all
 ‘ Had pow’r to stand tho’ free to fall ;
 ‘ But I must absolutely rove,
 ‘ An outcast from my Maker’s love ; 2970

 ‘ Who fix’d my horrid lot to dwell
 ‘ With fiends, and share the devil’s doom ;
 “ Consign’d my unborn soul to hell,
 “ And damn’d me from my mother’s womb !
 “ I hasten where the deepest hell, 2975
 “ Is mov’d to meet me from beneath ;
 “ Where damn’d apostate spirits yell,
 “ And gnaw their tongues, and gnash their teeth.
 “ Dives, and I, and Judas there,
 “ With gauling chains of darkness bound, 2980
 “ Must howl in blasphemous despair,
 “ And fiends return the doleful sound.
 “ A real, fiery, sulphurous hell,
 “ Must prey upon our outward frame ;
 “ But sorer pangs the soul must feel, 2985
 “ Tormented in a fiercer flame.
 “ The dreadful soul-consuming fire,
 “ God will into our spirits breathe ;
 “ A brimstone stream of vengeful ire,
 “ And slay them with a living death. 2990
 “ No ray of light, no gleam of hope,
 “ The dismal regions can allow ;
 “ ’Tis here, I must my eyes lift up,
 “ The pains of hell surround me now.
 “ Beneath yon boiling ocean chain’d, 2995
 “ Oppress’d, destroy’d, tormented, griev’d.”
 For ever lost, for ever pain’d,
 Forgot, unpitied, unreliev’d ;
 To pour out unavailing moans,
 And there a mad distracted fiend, 3000
 “ Converse with everlasting groans,
 “ Ages of hopeless end.”——
 “ O Death, this is thy sting ! O grave
 “ Of souls, this is thy victory !”

‘ The

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 85

‘ The saviour will not, will not save, 3005
 ‘ No spark of mercy, shines for me ;
 “ Hopeless my damn’d estate I mourn,
 “ God’s wrath is dropt into my soul ;
 “ His fiery wrath in me must burn,
 “ Long as eternal ages roll. 3010
 “ Hear, finners, hear an human fiend,
 “ And shudder at my horrid tale ;
 “ Consign’d to woes that never end,
 “ Before my time I weep and wail.
 “ The worm, the worm that never dies, 3015
 “ Must gnaw and tear me day and night,
 “ For ever banish’d from the skies,
 “ And cast out of the Saviour’s sight.
 “ Back to the presence of the Lord,
 “ O’er the vast gulph I cannot pass ; 3020
 “ I must not, must not, be restor’d,
 “ To see the glories of his face.
 “ Horror of horrors ! hell of hell !
 “ This makes the cup of wrath run o’er ;
 “ Far from my lord, with fiends to dwell, 3025
 “ And never, never see him more.” (b)

‘ Ye beasts that range the flow’ry plain ;
 ‘ Ye fish, that glide along the main ;
 ‘ Ye chearful songsters of the vale ;
 “ Ye insects flutt’ring on the gale ;” 3030
 ‘ Ye creeping reptiles of the earth,
 ‘ Of smallest, meanest, vilest birth ;
 ‘ On you what rays of favour shine ;
 ‘ How blest your lot, compar’d with mine !
 ‘ O might I share your case, and be, } 3035
 ‘ From that dread, double curse, set free }
 ‘ Reason, and immortality !
 ‘ With joy would I receive the meed,
 ‘ And bless the hand that did the deed.
 ‘ Still must I, Lord, of thee complain ? 3040
 ‘ And still deplore my case in vain ?

(b) See Mr. Charles Wesley’s hymn entitled, The Cry of a Reprobate.

Still

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' Still must I view thee as a foe? (i)
 ' Obtruding life, dispensing woe;
 ' Conferring strong desires of bliss,
 ' And yet withholding happiness: 3045
 ' From the full rivers round thy throne,
 ' Of peace and joy, not pouring down
 ' One drop on me, a wretch of earth,
 ' That I might cease to curse my birth;
 ' Might give my sad complainings o'er, 3050
 ' Nor envy brutes or reptiles more.
 ' Thrice happy brutes! on earth they keep
 ' Short watch, and then lie down to sleep,
 ' Thro' ev'ry scene of sense, they are
 ' To wretched man superior far: 3055
 ' In life they range the flow'ry field;
 ' They graze the fruitful turf untill'd;
 ' They drink the silver streams that flow,
 ' Unbrew'd, and unembitter'd too;
 ' No fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs, 3060
 ' No doubts, or fears their bosom shares;
 ' (These the peculiar lot we see
 ' Of hell-devoted souls like me;)
 ' Without their care, by gracious heav'n
 ' Their food and robes are kindly giv'n; 3065
 ' No toil they know, no anxious care;
 ' No bickerings at the bawling bar;
 ' Their good, is good unmixt, entire,
 ' Full suited to their heart's desire;
 ' If sickness, pain, or death commence, 3070
 ' Their ill no more than strikes the sense;
 ' No previous dread their peace can shake;
 ' No murmurings afterwards they make;
 ' When the worst comes, it comes unfear'd,
 ' Alike unknown, unseen, unheard, 3075
 ' No painful fear of death they know,
 ' One stroke begins and ends their woe;

(i) The Author has taken a hint or two in this complaint from Milton, and much from several parts of Dr. Young's works, without any other alteration than what was necessary for his verse and subject.

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- ‘ They die but once, then cease to be,
 ‘ Blest animals ! how happy ye,
 ‘ Too happy to complain like me. } 3080
 ‘ Yours is that pleasure, comfort, ease,
 ‘ Freedom from care, content and peace,
 ‘ For which poor reprobated man,
 ‘ Wishes, and prays, and sighs in vain.
 ‘ Father of mercies ! God of love ! 3085
 ‘ Enthron’d in perfect bliss above ;
 ‘ Why from my silent mother earth,
 ‘ Why didst thou curse me into birth ;
 ‘ Push into being wretched me
 ‘ Unhappy, the reverse of thee ; 3090
 ‘ Why tear me from my quiet dust
 ‘ Why out of non-existence thrust ;
 ‘ And make, when torn from peaceful night,
 ‘ A thankless present of thy light ;
 ‘ Why animate a wretch like me, 3095
 ‘ A clod of earth with misery ?
 ‘ O ! had my dust in peace remain’d,
 ‘ Nor e’er the human form obtain’d ;
 ‘ O ! had my reprobating God,
 ‘ Ev’n made me the most loathsome toad, 3100
 ‘ Or ev’n the vilest worm on earth,
 ‘ Rather than giv’n me human birth,
 ‘ Ordain’d me rational to be,
 ‘ And curst with immortality ;
 ‘ Plac’d me in such a dreadful state, 3105
 ‘ Where by necessitating fate,
 ‘ I must, I *must* sin on, and be
 ‘ Condemn’d to all eternity !
 ‘ Eternity ! O who can bear
 ‘ That doubly-dreadful sound to hear ; 3110
 ‘ What ! must there no reprieve be giv’n ;
 ‘ No hope from any point of heav’n !
 ‘ Ah ! mercy, mercy ! love divine,
 ‘ Do you for ever cease to shine ;
 ‘ Ah mercy ! art thou dead above, 3115
 ‘ Extinguish’d in the source of love ?
 ‘ Did I request thee, Maker, say,
 ‘ To mould me from my native clay ? ‘ Did

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' Did I solicit thee to plan
 ' And make me miserable man? 3120
 ' O why, my Maker, didst thou form
 ' A wretched, vile, unhappy worm;
 ' And in such circumstances place,
 ' Without one chance for happiness;
 ' Must nought but vengeance reign alone? 3125
 ' Where is thy love and pity gone?
 ' Must nought but pow'r, grim pow'r appear?
 ' Where are thy tender mercies, where?
 ' Sure as my will had not concurr'd,
 ' Towards my wretched being, Lord; 3130
 ' T' would but be equal, fair and just,
 ' To speak me back to native dust.
 ' And canst thou, Lord, look down from bliss,
 ' And see me in the dark abyfs;
 ' Calling thee by that tender name, 3135
 ' My father! in a sea of flame;
 ' O'erwhelm'd beneath thy vengeful ire,
 ' And plung'd in floods of raging fire;
 ' O canst thou see my hopeless soul,
 ' Bound fast within the burning pool, 3140
 ' O canst thou hear my raving moans,
 ' And see me pour eternal groans;
 ' Enclos'd with woe, transfix'd with pain,
 ' And struggling with my burning chain;
 ' Talking to fiery tempests there, 3145
 ' And sunk in gulphs of black despair;
 ' The raging flame in vain implore,
 ' To give it's furious burnings o'er,
 ' Toss, pant and writhe beneath thy wrath,
 ' And sink in waves of endless death, 3150
 ' Wilt thou, my Maker, raise thy name,
 ' And by my pangs thy pow'r proclaim?
 ' A worm whom yesterday gave birth,
 ' A short-liv'd reptile of the earth;
 ' Shall sov'reignty preside alone? 3155
 ' In my poor person, must not one
 ' Of all thy attributes, beside
 ' Thy sov'reign power, be glorify'd?
 ' Must

' Must I for ever bear the load,
 ' The vengeance of an angry God ? 3160
 ' Forbid it, Lord, and grant at least,
 ' This slender, almost no request ;
 ' When banish'd from the light of day, }
 ' I've wept a thousand lives away, } 3165
 ' And wearied torment of its prey ; }
 ' When I have borne thy vengeful ire, }
 ' And rav'd ten thousand years in fire, }
 ' O let me, let me then expire !
 Deep anguish, James ! enough to find,
 Compassion in the hardest mind ; 3170
 The humane breast with horror fill,
 And make one's very blood run chill ;
 A black complaint ! Yet think I must,
 Upon your scheme, entirely just ;
 A most disastrous cruel case ! } 3175
 Which takes in too near all the race ; }
 A terrible proceeding this,
 Against that gracious God to prove,
 Whose nature, and whose name is LOVE !
 A shocking scheme ! I sooner cou'd 3180
 Believe, my Friend, there was no God ;
 Than ever a believer be,
 In such a horrible (k) decree !
 And truly, Friend, I think it wou'd }
 Be less absurd, even tho' I shou'd } 3185
 Deny the being of a God,
 Than make him what some people frames,
 A dread, Almighty tyrant, James ! (l)

J A M E S.

Dreadful enough, Dick, I declare ;
 More dreadful, Friend, I think than fair, 3190
 And just, (says James) but once for all,
 To give your scheme a final fall ;

(k) So Calvin himself is honest enough to call it; see his Institutes, book 3. chap. 23. sect. 7. (l) See Mr. Wesley's Pre-
 servative against unsettled notions in religion, page 233.

I shall before your view present,
The following solid, clear, cogent,
Unanswerable argument.

} 3195

You surely will allow, my Friend,
When our first Sire in Eden sinn'd,
That first, that fatal sin of his,
Which spoil'd him of primeval blifs ;
With justice might imputed be
To all his fall'n posterity.

3200

And likewise, that *when* Adam fell,
God might have doom'd them *all* to hell,
Have justly pass'd each sinner by,
And left them for that sin to die ;
Without e'er sending of his Son,
To live, or die, for *any one*.

3205

Except you both these points receive ;
And what they *must* infer, believe ;
You don't (to me, 'tis clear as light)
Believe orig'nal sin aright.

3210

On th' other hand, Dick, if you do,
You must, my Friend, acknowledge too,
That both the doctrines (in dispute)
Of Reprobation absolute,

3215

And absolute Election, must
Be highly reas'nable and just ;
For if God justly might leave *all*
Mankind to perish in the fall ;

Without bestowing of his Son,
To be a Saviour e'en for one ;

3220

He then might justly *some* pass by,
And leave them in their sins to die :
Turn to the right or left, my Friend ;

You're fairly fast at either end ;
And are reduc'd, I think to a

3225

Inextricable dilemma. (*m*)

R I C H A R D.

(*n*) This argument, (James,) you esteem,
As one main pillar of your scheme,

(*m*) See Mr. Whitefield's works, vol. 4. p. 67. (*n*) Richard's answer, &c. to James's argument from hence to the line 4012, is taken from Mr. Fletcher's scripture scales, page 342, &c 2d. part, as near as the verse would admit.

I find,

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I find, (says Dick,) and therefore I, 3230
 Will do my best in my reply,
 Entirely to repell this charge,
 And answer it, my friend, at large.
 First then, God justly, we allow,
 Might *Seminally* (o) reckon to, 3235
 Th' account of Adam's unborn sons,
 Existing then within his loins;
 That sin, which (by the devil outwitted,)
 He had in Paradise committed:
 Because, they *Seminally* in fact, 3240
 Were real partakers of the act,
 And making part of's person were
 Corrupted, *Seminally* there.
 We therefore grant, that all the sons
 Of Adam, then within his loins, 3245
 Deserv'd to suffer, *as a Seed*,
 What Adam, as a *Person* did.
 Observe then, Neighbour, so far we
 With your Calvinian scheme agree,
 Maintaining James, as well as you, 3250
 Paul's observation (p) to be true;
 That we are constituted all,
 Children of wrath in Adam's fall;
 Consider'd in his fallen case,
Unvisited by heav'nly grace. 3255
 Now our first parents having sinn'd,
 God might, without dispute, my friend,
 Have justly sent them when they fell,
 And us within their loins to hell;
 Much more have justly pass'd us by, 3260
 And left us in their loins, to die;
 Without providing of his Son,
 To be a Saviour ev'n for one.
 You therefore have no reason, I
 Conclude, to say that we deny, 3265

(o) By feminal existence, understand the existence we had in Adam's loins before Eve had conceived; or the kind of being, which the Prince of Wales had in the loins of the King before the Queen came to England. FLETCHER.

(p) Ephes. ii. 3.

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The *genuine* doctrine, we find in
The Bible, of Orig'nal sin.

Thus much being then premised here,
Your leading blunder will appear ;
And you may see, if you'll attend, 3270
Your argument's great flaw, my friend ;
Which must to thinking men occur :
This flaw (observe) consists, in your
Confounding, (James) in this debate,
Our SEMINAL with our PERSONAL state ; 3275
And in concluding, that what must
Have in our *seminal* state been just ;
Would equal justice to us be,
When we existed *personally*,
As this appears your main mistake, 3280
I shall the propositions make,
That follow, which I make no doubt
Will yet more clearly point it out.

FIRST PROPOSITION.

The wages (then) of sin, is death,
Damnation, or eternal wrath. 3285

SECOND PROPOSITION.

The wages (next) to sin befitted,
In *person consciously* committed ;
Is suffering upon that occasion,
A *conscious, personal* damnation.

THIRD PROPOSITION.

Thirdly, the wages due (I ween,) 3290
To *seminal*, and *unknown* sin,
Is suffering upon that occasion,
A *seminal, unknown* damnation.

FOURTH PROPOSITION.

In the fourth place, when Adam in
The garden, had committing been, } 3295
A *personal* and *conscious* sin ;
God

God had been just, had he let fall
On him, the *conscious, personal*
Eternal punishment we call

}

FIFTH PROPOSITION.

Damnation. Fifthly, James, when we 3300
Sinn'd as a *seed* unknowingly,
In Adam, without doubt it must
Have follow'd, God had still been just,
Had he doom'd us, on that occasion,
To' a *seminal, unfelt* damnation. 3305
For then it might be clearly seen,
There had a just proportion been,
In ev'ry right and fair intent,
Between the crime and punishment;
We should have then ('tis clear, my friend,) 3310
Been punished *as* we had sinn'd;
That is, as truth and justice claims,
With *seminal* destruction James.
So then as we had sinn'd in him, (q)
Without being *conscious* of the crime, 3315
Or *guilt*, James, in the least, *so* we
Should have been punished we see;
Without the smallest *consciousness*,
Of suffering either pain or loss.
But would it not contrary be, 3320
T' all justice, right, and equity,
Because that we had guilty been,
Of *seminal* and *unknown* sin,
T' inflict a punishment infernal,
Personal, conscious, and eternal? 3325
For what, James, (after all evasion,)
Is calvinistic reprobation?
But a most horrible decree,
That vastly the majority
Of Adam's offspring, shall be found. 3330
Each to be personally bound,
Eternally to wallow in
Conscious and *necessary* sin;

(q) Adam.

Which sin draws after in th' event,
Conscious, eternal punishment. 3335
Hence it appears predestination,
To calvinistic, reprobation,
According to your scheme, my friend;
Is horrible, James, in its end;
Its end, which is to undergo, 3340
Conscious and everlasting woe;
But in the dreadful means, my friend,
Appointed to obtain that end,
'Tis much more horrible; which is
Necessary, Remediless, 3345
Personal sin; *Eternally,*
And *unavoidably* to be
Committed, and all this for sin,
Which in our *unborn*-state had been
Unknowingly, unconsciously 3350
Contracted; and, my friend, what we
Believe, to candid people, here
Must still more horrible appear,
Ev'n for that very sin which he
By his own absolute decree, 3355
Had *caus'd* to be committed, if
The scheme be true which you believe;
Should you reply, as well I know
Some Calvinistic people do;
That tho' they reprobated be, 3360
For their first Sire's iniquity,
It may be very clearly shown,
That they are damned for their own.
This poor evasion, in your need,
Will stand you, James, in little stead; 3365
Nay rather tends to make (my lad)
Still worse of what before was bad,
By representing God to be
So full of wrath and cruelty,
That he his unform'd creatures hated; 3370
And so, not only reprobated
Their persons, James, but fix'd them in
A state of *necessary* sin;

That

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 95

That thus their souls might be destroy'd,
For sin which they could ne'er avoid ! 3375

A dreadful tale, my friend ! which wou'd
Reflect as much contempt on God,

And his perfections, I aver,

(His goodness in particular,)

As I should, on the character

Of Phinehas, if I gave out,

That he contriv'd and brought about,

Zimri's and Cozbi's filthy crime ;

That in that fatal point of time,

He might his cruelty employ,

And both infallibly destroy !

So Nero, James, in time of old,

(The tale's in Roman story told,) (r)

That hateful, cruel monster, thus

The daughter of poor Sejanus,

Had doom'd to suffer death, but still

The Roman law oppos'd his will,

Because the harmless maid retain'd

Her virgin treasure yet unstain'd ;

Howe'er th' inhuman tyrant bent

Upon the fatal punishment,

The guiltless Virgin in his wrath

Deflower'd, and then inflicted death !

To illustrate the matter further ;

Suppose I had committed murder ;

Now, for this evil action, James,

The law condemns me to the flames ;

My sentence then is just, as I

Have sinn'd in *person* consciously,

Without *necessity*, I do

Deserve to be tormented so,

The judge without injustice then,

May ev'ry part of me condemn,

(r) There was a law in ancient Rome which prohibited the putting of a Virgin to death ; but the cruel and bloody tyrant Nero, being bent upon the destruction of Sejanus and his family, in order to elude this law with respect to his Virgin-daughter Phebe, ordered the hangman first to ravish her and then put her to death.

And all the unbegotten sons
 Existing then within my loins, 3410
 May justly *in me* share the flames,
 Because that *with* and *in me*, James,
 As part of me, at that same time,
 They had been guilty of the crime;
 Nor would *thus* suffering (you may see) } 3415
 A very great misfortune be }
 (My friend) to my posterity.
 Because ('tis plain) their *knowledge*, James,
 And *feeling* of the penal flames,
 On this account, would be no more 3420
 Than 'twas of my offence before.

But then suppose the judge reprieve,
 And grant me some more years to live;
 With this intent, to raise from me
 A numerous posterity; 3425
 Suppose again this business done,
 And these to men and women grown;
 Would it be good, or just, or fair,
 Should he to most of these declare;
 " Ye all were guilty as a seed, 3430
 " Of that abominable deed,
 " Which that vile wicked man atchiev'd,
 " Whom I some years ago repriev'd;
 " And from whose loins, since this was acted,
 " I have you ev'ry one extracted; 3435
 " My mercy, therefore, passes by
 " Your souls to all eternity;
 " And next my justice seizes on
 " And absolutely chains you down,
 " By my decree of reprobation, 3440
 " To certain, personal, damnation;
 " I force you, therefore, to inherit,
 " A vile, deprav'd, and wicked spirit;
 " And each in circumstances place,
 " Incurable, remediless; 3445
 " Wherein you will obliged be
 " To murder of necessity;
 " Then I as good, and just, and fair
 " An opportunity shall share, " Of

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 97

“ Of pouring vengeance on your heads, 3450
 “ For your *own* bloody, murtherous deeds,
 “ (Altho’ these murtherous deeds, ’tis true,
 “ Were unavoidable to you ;)
 “ As I had on your Father’s score,
 “ Of reprobating you before.” 3455
 Of such a speech, who does not see,
 Th’ injustice and dire cruelty !
 Who would not, James, (except ’tis true,
 Such inconsistent folks as you,)
 Ev’n blush from ear to ear, for shame, 3460
 DOCTRINES OF GRACE ! these words to name ;
 Or take upon them, friend, to teach,
 This was a kind and gracious speech.
 But on the other hand, if those
 Whom I deriv’d from me suppose, 3465
 I say, if all those persons be
 Repriev’d, my friend, as well as me ;
 Our lot together cast to wait,
 In a *remediable* state ;
 Where sin indeed abounds, we find, 3470
 And misery of every kind,
 But where restoring grace is found,
 Much more to triumph and abound ;
 (Much more indeed ! supposing we
 Are not *unnecessarily*, 3475
 By a wilful, mad, and stupid mind,
 To our own peace and int’rest blind ;)
 In such a case who does not see
 If they sinn’d voluntarily,
 If they their brother’s life destroy’d, 3480
 By murder, which they might avoid,
 (Much more, should they themselves put fro’ ’em,
 Pardon, sincerely offer’d to ’em,
 On reas’nable conditions,) they
 In such a case as this I say, 3485
 With justice might consigned be
 T’ avenging flames as well as me.
 Now, Jemmy, if this illustration,
 Exactly shew the situation,

And

And most deplorable estate 3490
 Of a Calvinian reprobate ;
 Who merely for an unknown sin,
 Which he (unborn) committed in
 The loins of Adam, is suppos'd,
 As unavoidably inclos'd, 3495
 In such a fatal state, wherein
 He must, of force, for ever sin,
 And then of consequence must be
 Condemn'd to all eternity !
 Will not (my neighbour) think you then 3500
 All candid and impartial men,
 Who weigh the circumstances fair,
 Wonder to hear my friend declare,
 This reprobating doctrine, must
 Be highly reasonable and just. 3505

J A M E S.

What ! (answer'd Jemmy, warm and quick,)
 Wo'nt you allow this, neighbour Dick,
 That God might justly have pass'd by
 All Adam's fall'n posterity,
 Without providing of his son 3510
 To be a saviour ev'n for one.

R I C H A R D.

I answer ; God forbid that we,
 So simple and absurd should be,
 The groundless fancy to retain,
 That God was *bound* to ransom man ; 3515
 No, no, my zealous neighbour, no,
 The Lord was no more *bound* we know,
 To execute redemption's plan,
 Than to create the first-form'd man ;
 Redemption being (by a Saviour,) 3520
 As free and undeserv'd a favour,
 As Adam's first creation was ;

J A M E S.

Why then, (says Jemmy) in this case,

You

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 99

You yield the argument 'tis clear ;
 For sure, no MEDIUM can appear, 3525
 Between the Lord's refusing (neighbour,)
 To send his son to be a Saviour,
 To part of Adam's fallen race,
 And reprobating them from grace ;
 Now if God justly might deny, 3530
 To give his only son to die,
 For part of Adam's race, he then
 Might justly reprobate those men ;
 That is ; he might predestinate
 T' an *irremediable* state 3535
 Of Sin, that part of Adam's race,
 He thus excluded from his grace,
 And so of consequence occasion
 Their unavoidable damnation.
 This, Richard, is a close, cogent, 3540
 Unanswerable argument ;
 Unless some MEDIUM can be shown,
 Which I presume can ne'er be done.

R I C H A R D.

No MEDIUM, neighbour ! (Dick exclaims,)
 Yes, yes, there is a MEDIUM, James ; 3545
 A MEDIUM which (you may depend,)
 Will spoil your great dilemma, friend,
 Your curious sophism circumvent,
 And overturn your argument ;
 The MEDIUM then observe (which we 3550
 Without a glass can clearly see,
 But which a Calvinist we learn
 Cannot, or will not, James, discern,)
 Is this ; if God had not design'd
 T' extend his grace to *all mankind* ; 3555
 Had he been absolutely bent,
 Upon vindictive punishment ;
 And had design'd to glorify
 Nought but his rigid Sov'reignty
 Upon the greatest part of men, } 3560
 For sinning *feminally*, when,
 They were in Adam's loins, he then }
 Might

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Might justly, James, undoubtedly,
 Have pass'd these unborn creatures by ;
 Yea further, he might (we allow,) 3565
 Have punish'd them severely too ;
 But then in this case, neighbour, he
 Would, have punish'd them with Equity,
 Ev'n so as they before had sinn'd,
 (As I observ'd before, my friend,) (f) 3570
 That is, as truth and justice claims,
 With *feminal* destruction, James.
 As Adam in his person had 'em,
 He would have crush'd guilty Adam,
 As head of all, and in the head 3575
 His Cainish reprobated seed,
 Ordering the birth of Abel, Seth,
 And others, blest with saving faith,
 In such a way, as no one in-
 To *personal* existence, bring, 3580
 But such as had a *personal* share
 In his redeeming love and care.
 And this, James, is the very plan
 (So worthy God, so kind to man !)
 Which God indeed, thought fit t' embrace 3585
 (According to our scheme of grace,)
 From all eternity ; and then
 Faithfully executed, when
 The bleeding Lamb of God was slain,
 And tasted death for *every man* ; (t) 3590
 Came down from heaven, the *world* to save, (u)
 Himself for *all* ; a ransom gave, (v)
 And a propitiating Lamb
 For the *whole world* (my friend) became. (w)
 A third flaw, neighbour, in your cause, 3595
 Consists in this ; that you suppose
 The leaving them (x) in this condition,
 Is but an harmless preterition ; (y)

(f) See v. 3312, &c. (t) Heb. ii. 9. (u) John iii. 17. and
 xii. 47. (v) 1 Tim. ii. 6. (w) 1 John ii. 2. (x) Namely,
 the reprobates. (y) That is, a passing by.

But in some cases, passing by,
 Is a most horrid cruelty ; 3600
 Thus, if a mother for one week,
 Her sucking infant should forsake,
 She absolutely puts an end
 To 's life, and quite destroys him, friend.
 But this is not the worst, I ween, 3605
 Calvinian reprobation being,
 A downright, (as Toplady saith,) (z)
 Appointment to eternal death ;
 " Predestination, (thus says he,)
 " To life, cannot maintained be, 3610
 " Without admitting reprobation
 " To death" eternal or damnation.
 But what, (I ask again,) could be
 More contrary to equity,
 And justice, James, than to ordain 3615
 To conscious, and eternal pain,
 Millions of unborn infants thro'
 The dreadful, horrid medium too,
 Of *unavoidable* transgression ?
 And all this merely on th' occasion, 3620
 Of seminal, unconscious sin ?
 A fourth defect, (my neighbour) in
 Your argument is this, that you
 Confound together in one view,
 And Calvin's imputation blend 3625
 With that which is scriptural, friend.
 And this appears to be the case
 Both as to sin and righteousness.
 If God, (my friend,) imputed sin
 To Adam's unborn offspring, in 3630
 Their seminal estate, it was
 Because they sinned in that case ;
 God's imputation always is
 According to strict righteousness,
 And naked truth, my friend, he ne'er 3635
 Sees that in men which is not there.

(z) See Mr. Toplady's historic proof of Calvinism, p. 574.

When Adam actually had
 Tainted his soul with sin, and made,
 His body mortal, all his sons,
 Existing then within his loins, 3640
 Sinful became as well as he
 And subject to mortality;
 And therefore with strict justice he
 Might to them all impute (we see)
 Sinfulness and mortality. } 3645
 That is, he might account them there
 All to be what they really were;
 Namely, depraved as a seed,
 And mortal, like their mortal head.
 On th' other hand the scripture faith (a) 3650
 Whoe'er partake of living faith,
 It shall to them imputed be,
 For righteousness and purity;
 The reason, James, of this is plain,
 Because it can't be there in vain; 3655
 Wherever genuine faith prevails,
 'Tis certain truth, it never fails
 To work by love, and more or less
 Produce the fruits of righteousness.
 When therefore God (as scripture faith) (b) 3660
 For righteousness imputeth faith;
 Or to believers, (if you chuse
 My friend, a diff'rent phrase to use)
 Imputeth righteousness, 'tis clear
 He only reckons that is there, 3665
 Which truly is in fact, that is
 A measure of true righteousness,
 According (as the bible faith) (c)
 To their degree of genuine faith.
 Here, James, observe on this occasion, 3670
 How different is this imputation,
 This righteous imputation, friend,
 From that which Calvinists defend?
 A cruel imputation this,
 By which God represented is, 3675

(a) Rom. iv. 5. 9. 11, &c. (b) Rom. iv. 5, &c. (c) James ii. 22.

As dooming arbitrarily,
 By unconditional decree,
 That myriads of unformed men
 Shall so be charged with a sin,
 They ne'er committed consciously 3680
 In their own persons, as to be,
 In person, and for ever, James,
 Tormented in devouring flames !
 Your argument to us seems still
 More inconclusive and futile, 3685
 As 'tis no less contrary to
 The scriptures, fairly taken thro',
 Than 'tis no reason's dictates, friend,
 (As all may see who will attend,) 3690
 For who can, James, (I ask it still)
 Fully, and fairly, reconcile,
 Your doctrine of the reprobate,
 With all those texts which intimate,
 This proverb, us'd too much before
 In Israel, shall be us'd no more, (d) 3695
 Because four grapes the fathers eat,
 The children's teeth on edge are set ;
 And that the son shall never die,
 (At least, James, not eternally) }
 For his bad fire's iniquity. (e) } 3700
 That the Lord's mercies wide extend
 O'er all his various works, my friend ; (f)
 Until despis'd, provok'd free-grace,
 To vengeance, and just wrath give place ;
 That he wills not *primarily*, 3705
 The death of any soul to see ;
 But on the other hand, he wou'd
 Have all men to return to God,
 Embrace their kind redeeming Saviour,
 And share forgiving grace and favour. 3710

From all those observations, I
 Have here advanc'd in my reply,
 'Tis plain to all who will attend,
 Your magnify'd *Dilemma* friend,

(d) Ezek. xviii. 2. 3. (e) Ezek. xviii. 20. (f) Psalm cxlv. 9.

No other praise or title claims, 3715
 Than that of a *mere Sophism*, James.
 Thus having view'd your famous charge,
 And answer'd ev'ry point at large,
 And fairly too, I think, I now
 Will venture to retort the blow; 3720
 And shew to each impartial man,
 That on the Calvinistic plan,
 Of boundless wrath, and narrow grace,
 Towards the unhappy human race;
 Of unavoidable salvation, 3725
 And unavoidable damnation;
 'This finish'd for the most, rejected,
 'That finish'd for a few elected;
 Each attribute of deity,
 (Ev'n not excepting sovereignty,) 3730
 Receive (I say) upon this plan,
 A partial, or a total stain.
 What of God's *goodness* must become,
 If all the tokens he gives some,
 Of this sweet attribute divine, 3735
 Be only giv'n with this design,
 More to enhance their souls undoing,
 And deeper plunge in endless ruin?
 Or that they but intended are
 To cast a false deceitful glare 3740
 Upon his everlasting wrath,
 Which dooms them to eternal death?—
 What of his *mercy*, which displays
 Itself o'er all his works, he says, (g)
 If millions of his creatures are 3745
 Excluded from the smallest share,
 By his own absolute decree,
 And that from all eternity?—
 What of his *justice* must become,
 If he with unrelenting doom, 3750
 Sentence, (most dreadful, James, to tell!)
 Myriads on myriads down to hell,

(g) Psalm cxlv. 9.

To

To groan beneath his heavy ire,
 And dwell with everlasting fire;
Because they've not believed on 3755
 The name of his beloved son;
 When if they had believed, neighbour,
 He was their Jesus, and their Saviour,
 (If you be right, none can deny.)
 They had believ'd a monstrous lie; 3760
 And claim'd a privilege, which they
 Have no more right to, James, I say,
 (As all impartial men must own)
 Than I have to the British crown?—
 Where, neighbour, on this scheme would be 3765
 God's attribute *veracity*?
 What would become, James, of the truth
 Of his own *word*, and his own oath,
 Which *says*, and *swears*, my friend, that he
 Delights not in the misery 3770
 Of his poor creature man, but wou'd
 He rather should return to God; (*b*)
 If notwithstanding all he says,
 To most, he ne'er gives means, or grace,
 Sufficient to avoid his wrath, 3775
 And to escape eternal death?
 If he to *every creature* send (*i*)
 His own ambassadors, my friend,
 To tell them without hesitation,
 All things for their compleat salvation, 3780
 Are ready now, (*k*) and that with ease,
 They may receive it if they please;
 When nought (if truth be fairly told)
 But Tophet is prepar'd of old,
 For far the greatest part of those 3785
 On whom they this false tale impose!—
 Nay further, what becomes on this
 Strange scheme of yours, God's *holiness*?
 If he indeed, as you pretend,
 In order to secure the end, 3790

(*b*) Ezek. xxxiii. 11. (*i*) Mark xvi. 15. (*k*) Luke xiv. 17.

Of his decree of reprobation,
 Which is the reprobates damnation,
 And with some show of justice, James,
 Condemn them to eternal flames;
 I say (my friend) if he ordains, 3795
 And absolutely fix the means,
 Of this dire *end* beyond redress,
 That is, their *sin* and *wickedness*?—
 What of his *wisdom* must become,
 If he address himself (as some, 3800
 Their doctrinal refinements state)
 And seriously expostulate,
 With souls, in all respects, as dead
 As corpse from whom the spirit's fled!
 And if he gravely urge to faith 3805
 And penitence, t' avoid his wrath,
 Persons, who can perform the thing,
 No more, than fish can speak and sing!—
 Again, my friend, what would, (think you,
 Become of his *long-suffering* too, 3810
 If it appears, he only wait
 To make the sinner's damn'd estate,
 More damned still, and plunge them, James,
 Still deeper in vindictive flames;
 And not a longer time t' afford, 3815
 (Tho' 'tis declar'd so in his word,) (1)
 T' escape his wrath and gain salvation,
 From so perverse a generation.—
 Where too on Calvin's scheme would be
 God's attribute of *equity*? 3820
 If Adam, and his consort Eve,
 Forgiving mercy could receive,
 Who wantonly with desperate stroke,
 Their duty *personally* broke;
 And rushed out of Paradise, 3825
 Into this howling wilderness;
 Yet there's no mercy to be had,
 For millions of their hapless seed,

(1) 2 Peter iii. 9.

Who in a wretched state forlorn,
 Of sin and misery were born, 3830
 And never had the power to chuse
 The good, the evil to refuse,
 And consequently (neighbour) in
 This case could ne'er have *pers'nal* sin.—
 And what of his *omniscience* too, 3835
 Becomes, if he cannot foreknow
 Future contingencies? If he
 To foretell aught with certainty,
 The fore-seen fact must first decree
 To happen of necessity; 3840
 Or otherwise, he must in fact,
 Himself perform the foretold act;
 Now was not Nero, in effect,
 As wise himself in this respect?
 Could he not, think you, very well, 3845
 With ease, and certainty, foretell
 Phœbe, should not remain a maid,
 When he a fix'd intention had
 To ravish her himself? Might he
 Not very easily foresee, 3850
 And so foretell with certainty,
 That SENECA should never die
 A common natural death, when he
 Resolv'd to kill him instantly?—
 And, might he not with ease foretell, 3855
 CRISPUS into a pit should fall,
 If he was forc'd to run a race,
 At darkest midnight, in a place,
 Where pits so close and frequent lay,
 'Twas hard t'avoid them in the day?— 3860
 Or what old-wife did you e'er know,
 Could not precisely point out too,
 When such a silly tale would be
 (And where) related, James, if she,
 Determined at any rate, 3865
 She would herself the tale relate,
 Or make some child supply her need,
 And tell the story in her stead;—

Where

Where must too, if your scheme be sound,
 God's *Loving-kindnesses* be found, 3870
 Which have of old been ever seen,
 Towards the favour'd sons of men?—
 And where, in this case too would be
 His strict *Impartiality*?
 If most men absolutely hated 3875
 For Adam's sin, and reprobated,
 Are never plac'd on this occasion,
 In a state of *personal* probation?
 Are they not us'd by God with far,
 Less kindness, James, than Devils are? 3880
 Who every one were try'd and fell
 For *personal* offence to hell;
 And undergo their dreadful loss,
 In consequence of their *own* choice.
 Astonishing indeed, my friend! 3885
 The Son of God should e'er descend
 From heav'n above, and here be known
 Flesh of the flesh, bone of the bone,
 Of countless millions ev'n of them,
 Who on the Calvinistic scheme, 3890
 Were ne'er indulg'd by him so far
 With kindness as the Devils were!
 What an hard-hearted kinsman then,
 To myriads of his fellow-men,
 Does Calvin represent our Lord? 3895
 'Tis shocking, James! tis most absurd!
 Suppose that satan in his room,
 By incarnation had become
 Our *kinsman*, and by this means got
Right of redemption; would he not, 3900
 Have acted like himself, if he
 Had left a vast majority,
 Ev'n in the depth of endless woe;
 And further, James, not only so,
 But to enhance their misery, 3905
 Contriv'd to let them clearly see,
 How partial in the same respect,
 He shew'd himself towards th' elect.—

Where.

Where shall we his *fair-dealing* see,
 If sin and iniquity, he 3910
 Declare to be the sole occasion,
 Of pain, and grief, and sure damnation;
 Yet the most horrid sin, (as late
 Calvinian authors intimate,)
 To some ev'n work for good, (as says }
 one) (*m*) } 3915
 And are by God made an occasion,
 Thro' Christ t' accomplish their salvation.
 And where shall *honesty* appear,
 If ev'n the God of truth we hear,
 Promise, that every family 3920
 On earth, in Christ shall blessed be, (*n*)
 When he has cursed (on your scheme)
 A vast majority of them,
 With a decree of reprobation,
 (And that too from the world's foundation,) 3925
 Which quite excludes them from all favour,
 Or smallest interest in the Saviour?—
 Nay what, ev'n of his *Sovereignty*
 Itself becomes, James, if it be,
 From those mild attributes disjoin'd, 3930
 By which 'tis qualify'd, my friend?
 If 'tis in a more dreadful light,
 Held forth to the astonish'd sight
 Of millions, than the sovereignty
 Of Babel's King appear'd to be, (*o*) 3935
 To Daniel's friends on Dura's plain;
 When swoln with rage, and high disdain,
 In furious fret, and raging storm,
 His angry visage chang'd it's form,
 And he in wrathful mood *decreed*, 3940
 They should the fiery furnace feed.
 For they their body's life, might (James,)
 Have sav'd from the devouring flames,
 Would they the image but adore,
 Which was a thing within their power; 3945

(*m*) See Mr. Hill's five letters to Mr. Fletcher, Letter 4. (*n*)
 Gen. xii. 3. &c. (*o*) Nebuchadnezzar. See Dan. iii. 19, &c.

But a poor Calvinian reprobate,
 Can ne'er escape at any rate ;
 The *horrible decree* is past,
 Which ties him up from first to last ;
 And spite of all he e'er can do, 3950
 His worst, and best endeavours too,
 Body and soul, must down in hell,
With everlasting burnings dwell.—
 Can God infinite *power* partake,
 If he *free-agents* cannot make, 3955
 Or creatures vested with *free-will*,
 By which to choose, or good, or ill ?
 And where's his *wisdom*, if when made,
 He cannot rule, o'errule, persuade,
 Reward, or punish them, but he 3960
 Must bind them with *necessity*,
 Or absolute constraint, and so
 His own best handy-work undo ?
 That is, they must by him, James, be
 Divested of *free-agency*, 3965
 Which is (beyond all disputation,)
 His master-piece in the creation.—
 Where too, upon your scheme, would be
 Ev'n God's *immutability* ?
 O'er which Calvinians fondle so, 3970
 And make so very much ado ;
 If after he suspended had,
 On our *free* actions, good or bad,
 Eternal joys, and endless woe,
 And this ev'n all the bible thro' ; 3975
 Yet notwithstanding we should find,
 At last, he so far chang'd his mind,
 That in the day of judgment, he
 Suspended endless misery,
 On Adam's evil deeds alone ;
 And endless happiness upon
 The good works by Christ Jesus done ;
 Dispensing bliss eternal, thro'
 The *necessary* medium too,
 Of faith and holiness, my friend, 3985
 Forc'd upon some men to the end, And

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. III

And endless grief conferring thro'
 The *necessary* medium too,
 Of sin, and unbelief, to th' end
 Forc'd upon all the rest, my friend.— 3990
 And to conclude, James, how shall we
 On your scheme, ever able be,
 To praise the Lord our God, for his
Invariable faithfulness,
 If it appear apparent still, 3995
 That his unknown, his *secret* will,
 And *public* declarations, are
 At an almost-perpetual war;
 And if your doctrines, in the strain,
 O' th' Poet (*p*) tempt us to complain, 4000
 " He's like the Protean Seer of old,
 " I know not how I must him hold ;"
 Instead of prompting us to say,
 With David in his pious lay ;
 For ever, and for ever, Lord, 4005
 Thy holy, pure, and sacred word,
 Is *settled* firm, in heaven above,
 Thy *faithfulness*, shall never move,
 But steadfast, certain, fix'd, and sure,
 To endless ages shall endure ? (*q*)— 4010

J A M E S.

I wonder, Dick, when all is past,
 What system suits your curious taste,
 Says James ; will you be pleas'd to give
 An abstract, friend, of your belief ?
 And to our view impartial spread, 4015
 The frame of your religious creed ?

(*p*) " Nescio quo teneam mutantem Protea nodo ; that is, he
 " is like Proteus ! I know not how to hold him : Whether
 " by his secret will, which has *absolutely* predestinated mil-
 " lions of men to necessary sin, and eternal damnation ; or
 " by his revealed will, which declares, that he willeth not
 " *primarily* that any man should perish, but that all should be
 " *eternally* saved, by working out their salvation according
 " to the talent, of *will* and *power* which he gives to every
 " man to profit withal." FLETCHER.

(*q*) Psalm. cxix. 89. 90.

You

112 A MODERN FAMILIAR

You seem to me, my friend, about
 These matters, to have deeply thought,
 I therefore, should be glad to hear
 A full, particular, and clear 4020
 Description, of the scheme which you
 Believe, as orthodox and true.

R I C H A R D.

With all my heart, (says Richard,) I
 Am very willing to comply,
 In this respect to do my best, 4025
 To satisfy my friend's request.

*The CREED of those, whom the CALVINISTS
 generally denominate ARMINIANS.*

First then, I do believe there is
 One God, possessor of perfect bliss ;
 A holy and a happy being,
 All-wise, all-powerful, and all-seeing ; 4030
 In faithfulness and truth compleat,
 Supremely good, supremely great,
 Eternal, omnipresent, pure,
 Powerful his word, his promise sure,
 Immutable and just is he, 4035
 His ways, are ways of equity ;
 Of pitiful and gracious mind,
 Long-suffering, merciful and kind,
 Whate'er is wisest, holiest, best,
 Of every perfect good possessor. 4040
 I next believe, my friend, that he
 Made every being which we see,
 Produc'd from nothing, every creature,
 Th' Almighty Father of all nature ;
 That still his Providence presides, 4045
 O'er all, supports, preserves, and guides,
 That every good his creatures share,
 The blessings of his bounty are ;
 And that the creatures every one,
 Depend on him and him alone. 4050

In

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 113

In Jesus Christ God's only Son,
 Equal, and with the Father one,
 I next believe; that urg'd by love
 He left the blissful realms above,
 Assum'd our nature, liv'd, was slain, 4055
 And tasted death for every man; (r)
 That having thus resign'd his breath,
 He rose, and triumph'd over death;
 Again ascended up on high,
 Assum'd his throne above the sky; 4060
 Where he remains with God to plead,
 And for the sinner intercede.
 These further truths too I receive,
 I in the Holy-Ghost believe,
 Who with the Father and the Son, 4065
 In heav'n are three, and yet but one?
 That God thro' JESUS, can below
 Forgive repenting sinners now;
 That when this fleeting world is past,
 God will our bodies raise at last, 4070
 Where they (if good) as says his word (f)
 Shall live for ever with the Lord.
 To look yet deeper in this matter,
 Respecting God's most gracious nature,
 The following sentiments are mine; 4075
 That all the attributes divine,
 Always, invariably agree,
 And act in perfect harmony.
 God's sov'reignty then never can,
 Oppose his goodness, I maintain, 4080
 His Justice never can invade,
 The schemes his Love and Mercy laid;
 His boundless power can ne'er in fact,
 Contrary to his wisdom act;
 And so, my friend, of all the rest, 4085
 Of which the Godhead is possess.
 I think this needs must be allow'd,
 Respecting the attributes of God;

(r) Heb. ii. 9. (f) 1 Thes. iv. 17.

For if a God *all* mercy must (*t*)
 Of consequence be a God unjust ; 4090
 It follows then without distortion,
 By the same rule of just proportion,
 If he's a God *all* Justice, he
 A God, unmerciful must be ;
 If Sovereignty preside *alone*, 4095
 His Love and Goodness must be gone ;
 If *only* boundless Power preside,
 His Wisdom must be laid aside ;
 And therefore, neighbour, I conclude
 This proposition firm and good, 4100
 That all God's attributes, in fact,
 In perfect concert always act,
 Ne'er interfere, oppose, disclaim,
 Infringe or thwart each other's aim,
 But sweetly each with each agree, 4105
 And will do to Eternity :
 But if one attribute divine,
 Can with superior lustre shine,
 Above the rest, 'tis GOODNESS ; this
 God's best-belov'd perfection is ; 4110
 It seems, it *only* seems to be
 The darling of the Deity,
 His first, his chief, supreme delight,
 " And more than infinite—"
 Without this he could never prove, 4115
 The object of our praise or love ;
 Were he not Good, th' unhappy he
 Would never be concern'd to see ;
 Would ne'er regard affliction's cry,
 Or notice when the Guiltless die : 4120
 " Eternal Justice then would be
 " But everlasting cruelty ;"
 Wisdom divine, but craft immense ;
 His Power, Almighty violence.
 Goodness ! delightful sound ! 'tis this 4125
 Which constitutes him what he is ;
 And those who will deny, that he
 Is goodness in the highest degree, (Unwit-

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 115

(Unwittingly, or by design,)
 His very God-head undermine. (u) 4130
 The sacred pages clearly shew
 What I of Goodness say is true,
 Full proof for my assertion bring,
 And sweetly teach the truth I sing.
 Shew me thy glory, Moses cry'd; (v) 4135
 His gracious Maker thus reply'd,
 I'll make my Goodness pass before thee;
 Observe, his goodness, is his glory;
 Tell me, says Moses, what's thy name? (w)
 Hark, don't you hear the Lord proclaim, 4140
 A name might ev'n despair controul,
 And cheer the list'ning Sinners soul;
 " The Lord, to pity still inclin'd,
 " Long-suffering, merciful and kind."
 " Of truth and goodness full o'erflowing; 4145
 " Mercy on thousands still bestowing;
 " Forgiving still, our souls to win,
 " Transgression, iniquity, sin.—(x)
 Hear how affectionately, he
 Desires that we may happy be; 4150
 Deploring in pathetic strain,
 The folly of his creature man,
 Who (when he kindly waits to bless)
 Refuses heav'n, and happiness.
 " O sinners turn, why will ye die? (y) 4155
 " Your Maker kindly asks you why?
 " I rather would your sins forgive;
 " Much rather that your souls should live;
 " By my own life I swear, that I 4160
 " No pleasure have that you should die; (z)
 " O turn ye, turn ye, and receive
 " Those blessings which I wait to give;
 " O turn, ye sinners, turn, for why,
 " O why will ye for ever die? 4165

(u) See Mr. Pomfret, on the Divine attribute of Goodness. (v)
 Exod. xxxiii. 18. 19. (w) Exod. iii. 13. (x) Exod. xxxiv.
 6. 7. (y) Ezek. xviii. 23. 31. 32. (z) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

- " I never willingly am seen
 " T' afflict or grieve the sons of men ; (a)
 " Mercy is charming in my sight,
 " My pleasant work my dear delight, (b)
 " But wrath and punishment severe, 4170
 " My strange unpleasing actions are ; (c)
 " O would the sons of men be wise (d)
 " And hearken to my kind advice ;
 " O was there in them such a heart, (e)
 " From sin and folly to depart ; 4175
 " To serve me with a holy fear ;
 " My gracious words attentive hear ;
 " Love me the Lord their God, and still
 " Perform the dictates of my will ;
 " That it might well and happy be, } 4180
 " With them and their posterity, }
 " Now, and to all eternity :
 " How can I give the sinners up ;
 " How utterly deprive of hope ?
 " How make them bear my dreadful ire ; 4185
 " And doom them to eternal fire ;
 " My heart is turn'd within my breast (f)
 " To think the sinners so distress ;
 " My bowels sound in tenderest strain,
 " And yearn o'er poor unhappy men ; 4190
 " I view them lost in sin and shame,
 " And pity kindles to a flame ;
 " I will not therefore exercise
 " My wrath, or let mine anger rise ;
 " My fury I will not employ, 4195
 " Or sinners suddenly destroy,
 " For I (who vengeance thus restrain),
 " Am God, and not revengeful man :
 " I therefore will suspend their fate,
 " And with unwearied patience wait ; (g) 4200
 " If they repent I will forgive ; (h)
 " If they return, I will receive ; (i)

(a) Lam. iii. 33. (b) Mic. vii. 18. Jer. ix. 24. (c) Isai. xxviii. 21. (d) Deut. xxxii. 29. Psal. lxxxii. 13. (e) Deut. v. 29. Isai. xlviii. 18. (f) Hof. xi. 8. 9. (g) 2 Pet. iij. 9. (h) Ezek. xviii. 30. (i) Isai. lv. 7.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 117

- “ Will they but know their gracious day, (*k*)
 “ They never shall be cast away; (*l*)
 “ They shall my grace and goodness prove, 4205
 “ And sweetly taste that GOD IS LOVE.” (*m*)

This, as to God’s most gracious nature —

As to his dealings with the creature,
 I next believe, whate’er God has
 Done, or decreed to come to pass; 4210
 He has decreed and acted this,
 According, (James,) to what *he is*;
 And not such matters brought about,
 According to what *he is not* :
 And so of consequence, that he 4215
 No creature ever could decree,
 (Who are in a capacity
 Holy and happy (James, to be,)
 For any end but to possess
 Both holiness and happiness. 4220
 That as their being and well-being (Jem)
 Proceed from, and depend on him,
 The harmony (in this design)
 Of every attribute divine,
 Require (beyond a doubt) that he 4225
 Exert his high authority,
 By sovereign command, that they
 To him a strict obedience pay;
 And on the other hand, that he
 Reward such acts with Equity, 4230
 And towards them such favour shew
 As is to such obedience due. (*n*)
 In other words, require it must,
 As God is wise, and good, and just,
 Such creatures should, on such occasion, 4235
 Stand in a Covenant-relation,
 To their creator, and that they
 Should each to each behave, (I say,)

(*k*) Luke xix. 42. (*l*) John vi. 37. (*m*) 1 John iv. 8. 16.

(*n*) That is, due, not on the foot of any *proper* but *improper* merit, in consequence of God’s own most gracious promise;
 See Rev. iii. 4. 5.

Maker and made on this occasion,
According to such a relation. 4240
 That if these favour'd creatures shou'd,
 Behave unworthy of the good
 Conferr'd on them in such relation;
 (That is, if they on this occasion,
 Should not perform those *duties*, James, 4245
 Their Covenant-relation claims,
 Which *duties* are *conditions*, friend,
 On which its benefits depend;)
 And forfeit by such bad behaviour,
 Their gracious Cov'nant-maker's favour; 4250
 I say, my friend, on this occasion,
 God's love, his mercy and compassion,
 With other attributes combin'd,
 Require, that he some means should find,
 All past offences to forgive; 4255
 And such offenders to retrieve,
 Into some state of fresh probation,
 In a new-covenant relation,
 Supposing that such favours, he
 Can shew to them consistently, 4260
 Without a real violation,
 Of Truth and Justice on th' occasion.
 But here, James, pray take notice now;
 This obligation does not flow
 From any Covenant-relation, 4265
 Bargain, compact, or stipulation,
 Which actually, (my friend) between
 The parties to subsist is seen;
 But springs from that relation rather,
 Subsisting 'twixt a *Child* and *Father*; 4270
 'Twixt such a *Being* and his *Author*,
 Such *Creature* and his kind *Creator*.
 Again, my friend, in this design,
 Ev'n every attribute divine,
 Acting in perfect harmony, 4275
 Require, that this New-covenant be
 Made suit in all respects by heaven,
 The state of those to whom 'tis giv'n;
 That

That is, that every promise be	}	4280
In <i>quality</i> and <i>quantity</i>		
Suited to their necessity ;		
That each condition, duty, term,		
Hereby requir'd they should perform,		
In this new-covenant-relation,		
Be such, as in their situation,		4285
(By those abilities, which they		
Possess <i>as Rationals</i> , I say,		
And <i>other helps</i> , by gracious heav'n		
<i>Which are</i> or <i>shall</i> to them be giv'n)		
These highly favour'd creatures may		4290
Be <i>able to perform</i> , I say. (o)		
But to be more particular still,		
Respecting all the good and ill,		
Which heaven to manifest is seen		
Towards the numerous sons of men,		4295
I next believe,—Th' Almighty made		
Adam our Sire and natural head,		
Perfect, according to his nature,		
A holy and a happy creature ;		
With power, sufficiently endow'd,		4300
Whereby he might have firmly stood ;		
And in this equitable case,		
(Assisted by creating grace,)		
Left him to choose, or good, or ill,		
According to his own Free-will ;		4305
He fell, and by this fall of his,		
Depriv'd himself of pristine bliss ;		
Of sinless, pure, immortal, he	}	4310
Became subjected (as we see,)		
To sin, pain, and mortality ;		
At the same time, James, all his seed,		
Existing in him as their head,		
As making part of him, in fact		
Were real partakers of the act ;		
And sinned in him <i>as a seed</i> ,		4315
Existing in their natural head ;		

(o) See Mr. Oliver's answer to Mr. Hill, entitled a Scourge to Calumny, page 145. 146.

And so of consequence we see,
 Sinful became, as well as he,
 And subject to mortality;
 This being then his situation,
 God doubtless might, on this occasion,
 Have *justly* doom'd him to damnation. } 4320
 And all his *unbegotten* sons,
 Existing then within his loins,
 Have punish'd with him *as a seed*, 4325
 Existing in their sinful head.
 I think, this *must* have been the case,
 With Adam and his unborn race,
 If God, my friend, had not design'd
 T' extend his grace to all mankind; 4330
 And place his seed in a better station,
 In a state of *personal* probation;
 Eternal Justice, in this case,
 Requiring for his unborn race,
 If God did punish them, that he 4335
 Should punish them with equity,
 Ev'n *as a seed* as they had sinn'd;
 As I observ'd before, my friend.
 For God would ne'er have suffer'd Adam,
 As he in his own person had 'em, 4340
 To have propagated, in this case,
 A sinful, wretched, helpless race,
 And giv'n them personal being, in
 A state of *necessary* sin, } 4345
 Whereby they could have only been,
 Fix'd in a cursed situation,
 Daily t' increase their own damnation,
 A nuisance to their fellow-creature,
 And vile dishonour to their maker.
 But blessed be our God, this case 4350
 Has not befallen the human race;
 No, mov'd by his own gracious nature,
 He had kinder thoughts towards his creature;

" When man was lost, Love look'd about,
 " To see what help in Earth, or Sky, 4355
 In

“ In vain, for none appear’d without,
 “ The help did in his bosom lie ;”

Accordingly, such was his grace,
 And favour for the human race,
 Eternal wisdom found a plan, 4360

Justice t’ appease, yet rescue man ;
 He gave his only son we find, (p)
 To taste of death, for all mankind, (q)
 T’ atone ev’n for the sin of all, (r)
 And raise them from their fatal fall. 4365

But here it may be needful, friend,
 My thoughts a little more t’ extend,
 And shew as clearly as I can,
 My notion of Redemption’s plan.
 And first then, I take notice, neighbour, 4370

That JESUS CHRIST our blessed saviour,
 Came not to move the God of grace,
 To love th’ unhappy human race ;
 No, this already was the case ;
 It was th’ eternal Father’s Love, (f) 4375

That sent the Saviour from above ;
 His wisdom, James, found out the plan ;
 His love supply’d the means to man ;
 He gave his son who liv’d and dy’d,
 That justice might be satisfy’d, 4380
 And that a way might open’d be
 Sinners to save consistently,
 According to his wise design,
 With every attribute divine.

I next observe ; God in this case 4385
 Did not divest the human race,
 Of their Free-agency, my friend ;
 This thing he never could intend ;
 No ; JESUS CHRIST was never giv’n,
 To drag some, neck and heels to Heav’n, 4390
 And take the rest of those that fell,
 And hurl them neck and heels to hell ;
 God never could on such a plan,
 In righteousness have judged man ; He

(p) John iii. 16. (q) Heb. ii. 9. (r) 1 John ii. 2. (f) John
 iii. 16.

He never could on such a scheme, 4395
 Have punish'd or rewarded them
 With wisdom, or with equity ;
 It incompatible would be,
 This inconsistent scheme, my friend,
 With a day of judgement in th' end. 4400
 I therefore think it very plain,
 That the Free-agency of man,
 With all things which in any-wise,
 It *necessarily* implies,
 Is not subversive of the honour 4405
 And glory of the bounteous donor ;
 For surely God in such a case,
 Would ne'er have giv'n the human race,
 A Power which inconsistent was
 With the glory of his own Free-Grace ; 4410
 But as he has thought fit to give it, (t)
 It doubtless is consistent with it.
 I therefore next believe, the aim
 With which the blessed saviour came,
 Was by no means in any wise, 4415
 As some erroneously surmise,
 To force ev'n one of human race,
 To a happy or unhappy place ;
 But first, his aim appears t' have been,
 To put away original sin, 4420
 Again renew our lapsed powers,
 And make a day of mercy ours ;
 To raise us to a better station,
 Plac'd in a state of fresh probation,
 Under better helps and promises, 4425
 Than Adam did at first possess.
 In other words t' express the case —(u)
 Christ dy'd for all the human race,
 First, that they every one might here,
 A TEMPORARY REDEMPTION share, 4430

(t) The Author does not understand what some call Natural Free-will ; he believes that all the Free-will to good which any of the human race enjoy, has been restored to them since the fall, for the sake of Jesus Christ. (u) See Mr. Fletcher's Fictitious and Genuine Creed, Page 15. 16,

And each be put into possession,
 Of an INITIAL (*v*) Salvation ;
 These blessings, which for every man,
 Christ *absolutely* did obtain ;
 Are *unconditional*, my friend, 4435
 And do not on our choice depend.
 Next, that he dy'd with an intention,
 That a *particular* redemption,
 Or *final* and *complete* salvation,
 Should be obtain'd on this occasion, 4440
Conditionally, James, I say,
 For all th' adult who him obey ;
 And thro' their day of tryal stand
 Faithful and true to his command.
 But that *without condition* he 4445
 For those who die in infancy,
Complete salvation did procure,
 And firmly for their souls secure.
 'Twill follow hence, *all* those that be,
 Yet in a state of infancy, 4450
 Are in a justified station,
 And certain of their soul's salvation ;
 ('That is, supposing they should die,
 While in their state of infancy ;)
 So says the great Apostle Paul ; (*w*) } 4455
 As condemnation came on all
 The race of men by Adam's fall,
 So free justification came
 On *all* mankind though Christ the Lamb :
 Thus Jesus shed his blood t' atone 4460
 For that orig'nal sin of one,
 Which had before involv'd, we see,
 His seed in sin and misery ;
 So that of consequence none will
 E'er for this crime be doom'd to hell, 4465
 Tho' from this bitter root I know,
 All present *temporal* evils flow,
 Which mortals, good or bad must have,
 Betwixt the cradle and the grave.

(*v*) That is, Salvation begun. (*w*) Rom. v. 18.

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Again; respecting those, my friend, 4470
 Who years of reason have attain'd,
 It follows next, Christ came these might
 Receive a seed of saving light;
 (Which I observ'd before to be
 The case with *all* in infancy, 4475
 Who by this saving light of God,
 Are with *capacities* endow'd,
 For their Redeemer's sake, to chuse
 The good, the evil to refuse;) 4480
 And that they should, in such a case,
 Be favour'd with a day of grace,
 Call'd by the scriptures on occasion,
 Th' accepted time, th' day of salvation; (x)
 That during this their gracious day,
 Ev'n ev'ry child of Adam may, 4485
 (At every time, in every place)
 Secure, thro' God's assisting grace,
 (Ev'n that assisting grace, which heav'n
 For Christ's sake unto all has giv'n;) 4490
 Whilst here below their maker's love,
 And endless happiness above.
 But next; if these in such a case,
 Should sin against their seed of grace,
 And forfeit, James, on that occasion,
 This first degree of their salvation; 4495
 Christ came that they (the scripture saith,) (y)
 Might by exerting living faith,
 In Jesus who had liv'd and dy'd
 For them, again be justify'd.
 That if they would on him depend, 4500
 Continue stedfast to the end, (z)
 And faithful unto death would be,
 They should be sav'd eternally,
 But that if they would not believe,
 And when they might his grace receive, 4505
 That they should surely perish in
 Their ways, and suffer for their sin.

(x) Isai. xlix. 8. 2 Cõr. vi. 2. (y) Acts xiii. 39. (z) Rev.
 ii. 10, 26, &c. Matt. xxiv. 13.

Hear, James, the gospel-declaration,
To all in such a situation ;

“ He that believes, whoe’er he be, 4510

“ And doth unto the end endure,

“ He shall be sav’d eternally,

“ The gospel-covenant is sure ;

“ Whoe’er in Jesus Christ believes,

“ And faithful unto death remains, 4515

“ He everlasting life receives,

“ For so the will of God ordains ;”

But whosoe’er will not believe,

Whoe’er of Jesus is asham’d,

Shall endless misery receive, 4520

He shall most certainly be damn’d. (a)

But note ; whatever (I suppose)

The gospel says, it says to those

To whom it comes, and not to them

Who never hear the gospel, Jem ; 4525

Here then I would take notice, neighbour,

Of those to whom the blessed Saviour

Is ne’er explicitly reveal’d ;

Who are in heathenish darkness held,

And who in ev’ry age have been 4530

By far the greatest part of men.

Now sure their maker never will

Send all these myriads down to hell,

Because they’ve not believed in

A Christ they’ve neither heard nor seen ; 4535

Should God their maker thus proceed

T’ would be hard measure, James, indeed ;

But this a gracious God, my friend,

Nor does, nor ever could intend ;

Tho’ well I know some *chosen* folk, 4540

Give them to satan at a stroke ;

And without doubt or hesitation,

Doom all the heathens to damnation !

However it is well for them,

’Midst all their peevish judging, Jem, 4545

That every self-elected minion,

Can only damn them in opinion ;

While one who better knew the mind
 Of God, towards all humankind,
 Declares, in every nation he (*b*) 4550
 Who fears God in sincerity,
 And worketh truth and righteousness,
 According to the light he has,
 Shall surely be, in such a case
 Accepted with the God of grace. 4555
 I therefore, with respect to them,
 Believe as truth what follows, Jem.
 I don't believe the heathens may
 Enjoy an acceptable day,
 Wherein they may regain God's favour, 4560
Independent of the Saviour;
 No; but that in and thro' the Son,
 And for the sake of what he's done;
 Tho' outwardly to them unknown, }
 Ev'n all the heathen world I say, 4565
 Are favour'd with a gracious day;
 And at all times, in every place,
 Each person does at least possess
 One talent of redeeming grace; }
 Which, in their day of visitation, 4570
 According to their dispensation,
 Will they but faithfully improve,
 They shall secure their maker's love,
 And thro' the Saviour's merits be
 Made happy to eternity. 4575

We see to what a great degree
 Th' Apostle prejudic'd could be (*c*)
 Against this glorious truth, my friend!
 Till God himself did condescend,
 To let him see the thing was true; 4580
 And then he owns, he better knew. (*d*)
 I wish with all my heart, that you
 Had learn'd good Peter's lesson too,
 And that the Lord had taught you, Jem,
 The same kind sentiments with him; 4585
 That is, to call no man, I mean,
 Reprobate, common, or unclean, Nor

(*b*) Acts x. 35. (*c*) See Acts x. 14. 28. (*d*) Acts x. 28.

Nor e'er assert the God of grace,
 Damns every soul of heathen race,
 In every age, and every place,
 Who ne'er by him so favour'd are,
 As outwardly of Christ to hear.
 Paul in a place I lately saw, (e)
 Declares too, those without the law,
 Shall fare accordingly, and shall
 Without the law, or stand, or fall;
 Their *conscienc*es in judgment, Jem,
 Accusing, or *excusing* them;
Excusing; pray observe th' expression;
 For those excus'd on this occasion,
 Will sure enough obtain Salvation.

The *saving grace* of God, (says Paul (f))
 Again) appeareth unto all;
 Instructing them while they are in
 The world, t' avoid the baits of sin;
 And while they pass this mortal strife,
 To lead a sober godly life,
 Trusting in God for present bliss,
 As well as future happiness.

More scriptures might be brought by far,
 But these I think sufficient are,
 To shew a *candid* fair Calvinian,
 The solid truth of this opinion.

Thus then, I have presented you,
 As full, clear, and distinct a view,
 Of my religious creed and plan,
 My friend, as possibly I can;
 And humbly hope it will be found,
 Consistent, open, clear and sound,
 Agreeing well in every view,
 With scripture and with reason too,
 A true God-glorifying plan,
 And most comfortable to man.

Review we, James, in the next place,
 Your so-much-boasted scheme of grace,

(e) Rom. ii. 12. 14. 15. 26. 27. (f) Tit. ii. 11. 12. 13.

And shew as clearly as we can,
 Calvin's predestinarian plan,
 That thus contrasting both together,
 We may pronounce fair Judgment, whether
 Calvin's, or our despised plan, 4630
 Is worthier God, more kind to man.

The first foundation-stone, which then
 This Babel to support is seen,
 Is first in *God* suppos'd to be
 A grim *unbounded sovereignty*, 4635
 Which swallows up in furious mood,
 All th' other attributes of God ;
 As Pharaoh's lean, ill-favour'd kine,
 Gorg'd those that were so fat and fine ;
 That is, this scheme is built we see, 4640
 On a supposed *sovereignty*,
 Which is not *limited*, it seems,
 By *justice*, *truth*, or *mercy*, James.
 The next stone in this building is,
 Calvin's *immutable decrees*. 4645

God being *such a Sovereign* then,
 As is supposed by these men,
 Is said to have form'd a firm decree,
 And that from all eternity,
 But not in such a manner, James, 4650
 As *justice*, *truth* and *mercy* claims,
 But merely, friend, accordingly
 As *this unlimited sovereignty*,
 Dictates its inexorable aims,
 Abstractedly considered, James. 4655
 'Tis on this supposition, Sir,
 The Westminster divines declare,
 (As in their Catechism you'll see,) (g)
 God did unchangeably decree ;
 Or that he fore-ordained has, 4660
 Ev'n *whatsoever* comes to pass ;
 So that of course it follows then,
 According to these learned men,

(g) See the Assembly's shorter Catechism, p. 5, quest. 7th.
 Whate'er

Whate'er befalls, or has befall
 In time, in heaven or earth, or hell, 4665
 Be't love or malice, war or peace,
 Or wisdom, James, or foolishness,
 Or sin or holiness it be,
 Or happiness or misery ;
 God did from all eternity, 4670
 These things unchangeably decree,
 And that he fore-ordain'd, my friend,
 Whatever happens, *means* or end ;
 And this he has, (they let us know)
 Decreed for his own glory too ! 4675
 The next stone, Jemmy, which with these
 Inseparably connected is,
 Is *unconditional election*,
 With it's correspondent *reprobation*.
 That God who by his *sovereignty*, 4680
 Ordain'd from all eternity
 Ev'n all things universally,
 Did in particular decree,
 How (as these cunning men suppose)
 Of men and angels to dispose ; 4685
 Accordingly, he has decreed,
 T' elect a little chosen seed,
Without condition, from among
 The miserable human throng ;
 To guide them thro' this mortal strife, 4690
 And give them everlasting life ;
 But that as objects of his hate,
 He had decreed to reprobate,
 (And *unconditionally* too,)
 Ev'n all the rest to endless woe. 4695
 And next, in order to obtain
 These ends, that God did fore-ordain,
 The necessary means, which he
 Would cause to work so powerfully
 And irresistibly, that neither 4700
 One, nor all creatures put together,
 Should e'er be able to repress
 Their course, or hinder their success. (b)

(b) See Mr. Oliver's scourge to calumny, page 146, 147.

Now this is the foundation, Jem,
 Of Calvin's false delusive scheme; 4705
 Which I confess I do not love,
 But altogether disapprove;
 And why I cannot think with you
 Herein the following reasons shew.

But let me first take notice here, 4710
 Of that vain supposition, Sir,
 Which Calvin's followers are so free,
 Of charging upon those we see,
 Who will reject and disapprove,
 Their doctrine of electing-love. 4715

Now this false supposition, Jem,
 Which runs so current amongst them,
 Is this; that one main reason why
 We will not with their scheme comply;
 A leading cause of our rejection, 4720
 Of their sweet doctrine of election,
 Is (if their words we credit may)

Our proud unhumbled hearts they say,
 Which will not (James) submissive be,
 T' our Maker's awful *sovereignty*; 4725
 Which they consider here we see,

As *singly* and *abstractedly*,
 Of men's eternal states disposing;
 Some men rejecting others choosing,
 And this too by no other measure, 4730
 Than that of his *mere* Sovereign pleasure.

Thus, James, they charge our opposition,
 T' our *haughty, carnal* disposition,
 Which will not to be damn'd submit,
 As their grim sovereignty thinks fit; 4735

And putting on, in this affair,
 An arrogant, assuming air;
 And speaking, when they treat their scheme,
 With wonderful assurance, Jem;
 In mighty self-important strain, 4740
 Hectoring and vapouring amain, (i) They

(i) See Mr. Berridge's Christian world unmask'd, where he
 boasts and vapours at a great rate that no Calvinist ever al-
 ters

They think to swagger in the end,
 Truth out of countenance, my friend.
 I often too have heard it said,
 By many a turn-coat renegade, 4745
 Whose volatile unsettled mind
 Is veer'd about with every wind
 Of doctrine, which they chance to hear ;
 True weathercocks, now here, now there ;
 Who in the right can never rest, } 4750
 But wheel about from east to west, }
 And whose last light is always best.
 Whose wits are ever on the strain
 T' impose upon themselves, and fain
 Some plausible pretence would find, 4755
 To hide the weakness of their mind ;
 I say, I oft have heard it said
 By such as these ; they often had
 Strove (to be sure !) and strove again,
 And fought with all their might and main, 4760
 And entertain'd great disaffection,
 Against this doctrine of election ;
 O yes ! they great occasion had,
 To know the stir which *nature* made,
 In her blind ignorance and hot-zeal, 4765
 Against this doctrine of the gospel ;

ters his sentiments, but always dies at the foot of his colours : And rails on the Arminians for the contrary practice. However Mr. Berridge must either have been little acquainted with men and books ; extremely inattentive ; (which probably was the case) or guilty of publishing a wilful falsehood. For whilst the names and conduct of John Goodwin, Archbishop Usher, Richard Baxter, Dr. Watts, and others that might be mentioned are remembered, it will be easy to prove the falsity of his assertion. Yet we allow very readily the case is far more rare with the Calvinists than the Arminians ; and we esteem it no wonder for many (we think) obvious reasons ; in particular we have a violent suspicion, that but too many who have presumed themselves elect, make in reality the peculiarities of their opinion their foundation, so that he that touches them touches the apple of their eye ; and they are ready to cry out with poor Micah of old, You have taken away (or are attempting to take away) my Gods, and what have I more ?

But

But that at last it so befell
 Something from heav'n (may hap from hell!)
 Quite overcame and mortify'd
 Their sad carnality and pride, 4770
 Some "furnace" (*k*) taught them to approve,
 And "peep" at sweet electing-love;
 And strange as it may seem to be,
 Gave them this soothing truth to see,
 Through Calvin's light which on them shone, 4775
 Some are elect, and *I am one*;
 For e'er they "peep" or will embrace,
 This doctrine of Calvinian grace,
 They will take care, you may depend,
 To "peep" from the right box, my friend, 5780
 That is, e'er they embrace this plan,
 They will take all the pains they can,
 A strong presumption to effect,
 That *they themselves*, (*James*,) are *elect*;
 Which having done, I can assure ye, 4785
 Those may expect to feel their fury,
 Whose pride and insolence exclaims,
 Against their great *Diana*, *James*,
 And grim *Apollyon* her brother;
 I mean both by the one and th' other, 4790
 Those twins, so deep in their affection,
 Call'd reprobation and election;
 For when these humble creatures have
 Presum'd *themselves* elect and safe,
 They slander with a vengeance then, 4795
 As well themselves as other men;
 Pretending their dislike and hate
 T' election in their former state,
 Arose from their beclouded, blind,
 Proud, ignorant, and carnal mind; 4800
 But now upon a close inspection,
 (Their eyes being clear'd by *self-election*, And

(*k*) See Mr. Berridge's *Christian world unmask'd*, where in order to support his slanderous charge against his opponents; that 'tis owing to the pride of their carnal nature that they reject the doctrine of absolute election; and to hide or apologize for his own unsteadiness, he pretends it was a furnace, viz. (I suppose) some severe affliction that induc'd him to receive it.

And by John Calvin's candle lighted,
 (Tho' they before were so dim-lighted,)
 They see surprizing sights descend, 4805
 And dream strange dreams indeed, my friend :
 They're got above legality,
 Have attain'd true christian liberty,
 All their salvation-work is done,
 Finish'd, e'er it be well begun ! 4810
 In Christ they perfect are, and so
 Have nothing in the world to do ;
 They live it seems without their frames,
 Or spiritual feelings, James,
 Sin that abominable thing, 4815
 Which brought all evil into being,
 So hateful to a holy God,
 To them shall even work for good,
 Their covenant is sure, and they
 Shall never, never fall away :— 4820
 True ; but unhappily we find,
 'Tis a cov'nant with the carnal-mind,
 Which this flesh-pleasing scheme we see,
 Suits to the greatest nicety ;
 And satan who is far too wise, 4825
 To break their peace, or ope' their eyes,
 Leaves them in their delusive dream,
 'T' enjoy at ease their darling scheme ;
 And thus while they imagine, neighbour,
 They engross God's kingdom and his favour, 4830
 (Saw they the truth without disguise,)
 They're but in a fool's paradise. (m)
 As for poor Reprobates, my friend,
 And their damnation without end ;
 They talk of them, you may discern, 4835
 With as much ease and unconcern,
 As if to be condemn'd to dwell,
 And suffer endless pains in hell,
 Were little more than to retire
 And sit by some back-kitchen fire, (n) 4840

(m) See Mr. Fletcher's 2d Check to Antinomianism, P. 86.

(n) See Mr. Sellon's Vindication of the Church of England
 from the charge of absolute predestination, P. 81. So

So little do they feel, it seems,
 (Be they but safe) for others, James !
 Do we these mighty censors see
 More full of true humility ?
 Or that more notable they prove, 4845
 For patient meekness, than for love ?
 For, James, to hear them sneer and chide,
 And rail at other peoples pride,
 One might expect from this parade,
 By *tongue-abas'd*, professors made, 4850
 They all would be, at least would strive
 To be, the humblest souls alive ;
 As meek as th' inoffensive dove,
 And full of gentleness and love :
 But out, alas ! where shall we find 4855
 A Calvinist of such a mind ?
 For while their *mouths* are fill'd we see,
 With meekness and humility,
 Their conduct shews their *hearts* and *scheme*,
 Share little of these virtues, Jem ; 4860
 At least towards those people, who
 Think not as they are known to do :
 For while they talk as none (I say)
 Could rightly honour grace but they,
 Or genuinely submissive be, 4865
 To God's essential sovereignty ;
 'Cause none have got (they as good as say,)
 Such meek and humble hearts as they ;
 Yet while they for their scheme contend,
 You plainly may perceive, my friend, 4870
 If you their writings but peruse,
 What vulgar Billingsgate abuse,
 These humble souls think fit to use,
 When grappling their opponents, Sir ;
 Do but observe, you'll see, or hear, 4875
 They think no name too mean or vile,
 To ornament their slanderous stile ;
 No base comparison too rude,
 For vile Arminians they conclude :

Jesuit,

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 135

<i>Jesuit, old fox (o) Arminian knave,</i>	4880
<i>Worthy transporting for a slave ;</i>	
<i>Or even hanging in a rope ;</i>	
<i>A lying sophister, a pope ;</i>	
<i>Bellwether of a blinded clan ;</i>	
<i>Apostate, heretic, carman ;</i>	4885
<i>A Proteus, conjurer, a quack,</i>	
<i>A whore of Babylon, a jack</i>	
<i>Of all trades, teacher of free-will ;</i>	
<i>Coward, old plagiary, wind-mill ;</i>	
<i>In shameful forgery employ'd,</i>	4890
<i>Of truth and common honour void ;</i>	
<i>A nuisance, pest, assassin too,</i>	
<i>Religious gambler, oyster-frow ;</i>	
<i>Lying apostle, (p) crafty man, (q)</i>	
<i>A shatter-brain'd old gentleman, (r)</i>	4895
<i>A libeller, (f) a liar, rude,</i>	
<i>Of most gigantic magnitude ; (t)</i>	
<i>Apostate miscreant (u) (that's civil !)</i>	
<i>Ungodly slanderer, (v) a devil ; (w)</i>	
<i>This Solomon in a cassock ; (x)</i>	4900
<i>A temporizing weathercock ; (y)</i>	
<i>Blind guide, (z) designing wolf (a) is he,</i>	
<i>A lump of inconsistency ; (b)</i>	
<i>An impudent audacious liar ; (c)</i>	
<i>An idiot rolling in the mire ; *</i>	4905
<i>Reviler too, who cannot feel ; (d)</i>	
<i>Shameless, and incorrigible ; (e)</i>	

(o) See Mr. Berridge's Christian world unmask'd, where he indirectly compares his opponents to young and old Foxes. (p) See Mr. R. Hill's Imposture detected, &c. p. 4. (q) Ibid. p. 40. (r) Ibid. p. 35. (f) Ibid. p. 5. (t) Ibid. p. 20. (u) Ibid. p. 31. (v) Ibid. p. 18. (w) Ibid. p. 30. (x) Ibid. p. 12. (y) Ibid. p. 33. (z) Ibid. p. 24. (a) Ibid. p. 5. Mr. T. in the Gospel Magazine calls him a "Prowling Wolf." (b) Ibid. p. 36. (c) See the Review of Mr. Wesley's last Journal, in the Gospel Magazine (as 'tis called) for (I think) May and June 1777, the Author of which I hear is Mr. T——y. * See Mr. Toplady's letter to Mr. Wesley, where Mr. Wesley is compared to an "insane person rolling himself in the mud." (d) See Imposture detected, &c. p. 20. where Mr. Hill's words are "unfeeling reviler." (e) Ibid. p. 39.

That

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That they as soon would strive or bawl
 With a *chimney-sweeper* for the wall,
 As canvass arguments with him. (f) 4910
 Rare humble gospel-treatment, Jem!
 We next in order come to *John*
Wesley's ragged legion,
 Of *lay-lubbers* (g) (his preaching laymen,)
Barbers, coblers, tinkers, draymen. (h) 4915
 Now for his hearers, Jemmy, those
Gaping dupes he leads by th' nose; (i)
 Fine epithet! bestow'd upon
 Those *toad-eaters* to Mr. John; (k)
Deluded followers, who if they 4920
 Persist to th' last in Wesley's way,
 It is *impossible* that even
 One should e'er find his way to heaven. (l)
 Does language such as this bespeak
 A heart not carnal, humble, meek? 4925
 Yet all these names are given we see,
 Direct or comparatively,
 Even to the best and chief of those
 Who Calvin's Gospel dare oppose.
 'Tis shocking work, my neighbour, when 4930
 Unhumbled, self-conceited men,
 Rise and oppose in raging mood,
 The truths, and ministers of God!—
 Men *not meek doers of the law,* (m)
But insolent bold judges, who 4935
 Absurdly dare on that decide,
 By which themselves shall soon be try'd.—
 Who instead of sitting before all
 God's messengers as criminal,
 With arrogance dare invade, 4940
 The judges high, august and dread
 Tribunal; and from thence arraign,
 Ev'n the most venerable train
 Of his ambassadors, if they
 As truth receive not what they say, 4945

(f) See Mr. Toplady's letter to Mr. Wesley. (g) *Imposture* detected, p. 11. (h) *Ibid.* p. 2. (i) *Ibid.* p. 6. (k) *Ibid.*
 (l) *Ibid.* (m) James iv. 11.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 137

Men, who should *self-abased fall*,
Upon their faces before all,
And render glory unto God,
By owning in a thankful mood,
 That *of a truth*, the Lord appears, 4950
 With all his faithful ministers,
 And that of each denomination,
 Who thro' the Saviour preach salvation;
 But who far from this practice, Jem,
 Dare boldly venture to condemn } 4955
 The very word that judges them;
 And when they in the pulpit see
 A man of God, suppose that he
 Stands at their bar; try him with as
 Much insolence as Moses was 4960
 By Korah and his frantic train;
 And cast him with less kindness than
 Pilate (tho' with himself at strife,)
 Unjustly cast the Lord of Life;
 And next, by force, a fool's-coat tack, 4965
 Of their own making on his back,
 Then from *the Scorners's seat*, at once
 Decisive sentence they pronounce;
 "He is unconverted, legal, blind;
 Foe to free-grace, of darkened mind; 4970
 False prophet, papist, heretic,
 Wolf in sheep's-cloathing" and the like.—(n)
 Such an unchristian spirit, Sir,
 (So prejudic'd these people are!)
 You may perceive on these occasions, 4975
 If you but note their conversations;
 Such self-importance, (James,) appears,
 Such haughty looks, such scornful sneers;
 Such fierce contempt they round them deal;
 Such proud disdain, such bitter zeal; 4980
 Such pious gibes, important huffs,
 Such public taunts, such private scoffs;
 Such laughing wits, such slanderous tongues;
 Sarcastic Jokes, satyric songs;

(n) See Mr. Fletcher's second Check, P. 65, 64.

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Are by these spiritual Calvinians, 4985
Profusely lavish'd on th' Arminians!

Nay, James, to such a height is seen
To rise, their malice and their spleen,
As even t' expose to public view
The most apparent falshoods too, 4990

In mis-nam'd Gospel-Magazines (o)
Where truth and error intervenes,
Vile slander, and low wit appear,
Sound words and blasphemy—and where
Low-humour'd DIP (p) is seen a suitor, 4995
To Satan for a coadjutor,

And fathers lies upon the Devil
Which even that author of all evil
Himself might be asham'd to own:
Attend to this and blush M—c G——n. 5000

Their charge of *Pride* and so forth, Jem,
Comes with as bad a grace from them
You'll see, if you with me attend,
The following circumstances, friend.

I think, James, neither I nor you, 5005
No Calvinist yet ever knew,
Who thought himself ordain'd by fate,
A curst helpless reprobate;
This a most dreadful blow would be,
And lower their thoughts of Sovereignty, 5010
Nor would they like, nor would they prate,
Of *sovereign wrath*, at such a rate,
As now they do of *sovereign* grace,
If 'twas *their own* unhappy case;
Selfish enough howe'er they are, 5015
Of this to take sufficient care, And

(o) See a Pamphlet entitled the Gospel Magazine. A Monthly medley (says Mr. Sellow) of truth and error, sound words and blasphemy, trumped up as a vehicle to convey Calvinism and slander round the nation. (p) A Baptist minister remarkable for low wit and humour in his productions; and who in an anonymous work generally supposed to be his, entitled Infernal Conference, or Dialogues of Devils, towards the end of the second Vol. has had assurance enough to make one of his devils indirectly assert so gross a falshood as that Mr. Wesley believes and maintains the doctrine of Supererogation.

And never fail a faith t' effect,
 That *they* are one of God's elect;
 You now may note the subtle arts,
 Their little, narrow, selfish hearts 5020
 Make use of to impose on them
 As well themselves as other men;
 They work themselves to a persuasion,
 Their conduct on this whole occasion,
 And their belief of all these things, 5025
 From a genuine gracious motive springs,
 Of most profound humility,
 And reverence for God's sovereignty:
 " Yes, God may do, (tis clearly known)
 " Whate'er he pleases with his own, 5030
 " (Say they) and sure tis highly fit,
 " We to his Sovereignty submit;"
 To this we readily agree,
 My friend, if by your sovereignty,
 You mean a sovereignty, Jem, 5035
 Which may be truly worthy him;
 But we 've sufficient knowledge, James,
 Your head on this occasion frames, }
 A sovereignty God never claims, }
 And which would inconsistent prove, 5040
 With's wisdom, justice, truth and love;
 And therefore we reject it, neighbour:
 But let me notice, by your favour,
 The great absurdity and weakness,
 Of your so-much-pretended meekness, 5045
 Submission and humility,
 To what you call God's sovereignty:
 This sovereignty you think will prove
 A source of never-failing love,
 To *you*, secure *your* happiness, 5050
 And bring *you* to eternal bliss;
 Now to be sure, James, it must be
 A mark of great humility,
 You should *submit* to be forgiv'n,
 And be *content* to go to Heav'n! 5055

But would you, James, submit as well
 D'ye think, to be ordain'd to dwell
 With everlasting fire in hell;
 That is, to share the dreadful fate
 Of a Calvinian reprobate; 5060
 I'm apt to think in this case, fir,
 One might some small complainings hear,
 And see you turn a woeful face,
 On narrow, partial, sovereign grace;—
 With such sly, subtle, specious arts, 5065
 Are you deceiv'd by your own hearts;
 Supposing all the ardent zeal,
 You for your favourite system feel,
 Must from a gracious motive be
 Of reverence and humility: 5070
 When (if the case be fairly try'd)
 It springs from *selfishness* and pride.
 Howe'er, as 'tis an usual strain,
 For those in fault to first complain,
 So upon this occasion, neighbour, 5075
 With a respect to our behaviour,
 Your party on *our* pride exclaims;
 But we think quite unjustly, James,
 As we can solid reasons give,
 Why we your doctrines can't receive; 5080
 And shew each eager reprimander,
 That (spite of Calvinistic slander),
 'Tis not from *pride*, but, *reasons* found
 Scriptural, rational, and sound.
 If you desire me to declare, 5085
 What these substantial reasons are,
 I'll give them here directly, fir.
 First, then, I disapprove this scheme,
 Because that it supposes, Jem,
 The ever-blessed God to be, 5090
 (In an inconceivable degree,)
 A tyrant, the most dreadful, fir,
 And most detestable that e'er,
 Existed; making him we see,
 An *infinite* sovereign be, 5095
 Devoid of *justice* and *mercy*; Next,

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 141

Next, 'cause supposing that he has
 Decreed *all things* that come to pass,
 It unavoidably herein
 Supposeth, he decreeth sin ; 5100
 And hereby maketh God, we see,
 The author of all sin to be,
 That *has already* been committed,
 Or *will hereafter* be repeated ;
 Again a third objection, Jem, 5105
 Is this, because 'tis plain this scheme
 Supposes God to have *decreed*
 The self-same things he has *forbid* ;
 Next, 'cause the scheme of these decrees,
 Supposes there no difference is, 5110.
 (As to abilities for action,
 In any manner of transaction)
 Between intelligent agents found,
 And stocks and stones upon the ground ;
 Fifthly, 'cause your scheme in this case, 5115
 Supposes that *God views* men as
 Involuntary agents, Jem,
 Yet at the same time *deals with* them
 As they were absolutely free ;
 That is, James, it supposes he 5120
 Gives rational instructions, and
 Promises, threatenings, and commands,
 With very urgent exhortations,
 And frequent pressing invitations,
 With other such like ways and means, 5125
 And all to absolute machines !
 Sixthly, because this cruel scheme
 Demonstrably supposes him
 The blessed God, (James,) to resemble
 (A thought enough to make one tremble,) 5130
 Resemble, nay indeed of course
 It makes him infinitely worse,
 All circumstances put together,
 Than a supposed human father,
 Who desires ten children to possess, 5135.
 For the following horrid purposes !

First, that he might be sure t' enjoy
 The *honour* and the *pleasure* too,
 Of heaping gifts and favours, Jem,
 Quite undeserv'd on *one* of them ; 5140
 And secondly, that he might share,
 Like *honour* and like *pleasure*, fir,
 (According to his fix'd design)
 Of tearing all the other *nine*
 'To pieces, in a furious fit, 5145
 With *red-hot-pincers*, *bit by bit* !
 I fully am persuaded, fir,
 Within myself, that if there were
 Such an incarnate Devil found,
 In all this whole terrestrial round, 5150
 The most unnatural savage souls,
 Enclos'd between the distant poles,
 With one united voice and mind,
 Would rise against the horrid fiend,
 And curse him to his native hell ; 5155
 While ev'n the devil himself less fell,
 Would almost be, with all his train,
 Ready to curse him back again,
 As too infernal vile an Elf
 Even for the lowest hell itself ! 5160
 And yet all this unnatural, this
 Unheard of barbarous wickedness,
 Of this supposed human fiend,
 Is nothing when compar'd (my friend,)
 To what your doctrine of election, 5165
 And of the reprobate's rejection,
 Attributes to th' *most holy, good,*
Most merciful and blessed God, (q)
 These are the reasons which I give,
 (Reasons sufficient I conceive) } 5170
 Why I your doctrines can't believe ;
 They talk of honouring God, whereas
 They make him worse than Moloch was,
 'To far the greater part, ('tis said)
 Of those whom his own hands have made : 5175

(q) See Mr. Oliver's Scourge to Calumny, P. 147, 148.
 But

But mine present him to our sight,
 In the most amiable light ;
Sincerely kind, and full of grace,
 'To *every* soul of human race,
 During the *day* of their salvation, 5180
 'The gracious day of visitation ; (r)
 And at the final judgement-call,
 Inviolably *just* to all.
 How can you possibly object
 And treat this scheme with disrespect ? 5185
 Or how a doctrine disapprove,
 So worthy of the God of love ?
 Jammy, how bright *my* prospects shine !
 How gloomy, dark, and dreadful *thine* !
 (/) A trembling world beneath the rod, 5190
 'The curse of a devouring God !
Earth but a slaughter-house immense,
 'The shambles of omnipotence !
Heaven's face all stain'd with human gore,
 And causeless massacres all o'er, 5195
 Of countless millions born to feel
 The soul-distressing fires of hell,
 And suffer pangs and tortures there,
 Most inconceivably severe,
 And (dreadful thought !) those pangs to be 5200
 Endur'd to all eternity !
 And can this scheme, my friend, be true ?
 I start with horror at the view,
 It bids me dread this mortal strife,
 And shudder at the thought of *life*. 5205
 Poor man, a spark by wrath divine
 From non-existence struck, to shine,
 A moment, and that moment too,
 Replete with sorrow, grief, and woe !
 Who would be born in such a case, 5210
 To a world of grief and wretchedness ?
 Where nought substantial we can find,
 But pain and anguish of the mind ; Where

(r) Luke xix. 42, 44. (/) I have taken here pretty freely
 from Dr. Young's Night-thoughts, as the man of reading
 will easily perceive.

Where joy to *most* (if joy it be)
 But heightens future misery ; 5215
 The greater *such* a joy we find,
 The *more* it pains the conscious mind,
 Which knows for every pleasure here,
 Or seeming favour it may share ;
 The odds at least, are ten to one, 5220
 Perhaps a hundred was it known,
 Ten million pangs, in utter woe,
 (Which the poor soul must surely know) }
 Await her in the world below !
 Now, James, ingenuously tell, 5225
 Do you these observations feel ?
 Or has your scheme so much perverted,
 And made you so extreme hard-hearted,
 That nought but vengeance and distress,
 Your vitiated taste can please ? 5230
 Can you believe the sure damnation,
 And view in your imagination,
 Whole shoals of reprobates pass'd by ;
 And then with cold indifference cry ;
 What is't to us, their pain and shame ? 5235
 We've nought at all to do with them,
 " Let all but us in Tophet dwell,
 " Away with reprobates to hell." (t)
 Unworthy must that mortal be,
 Who can the pains of others see 5240
Unmov'd, he appears on such occasion,
 Devoid of bowels of compassion,
 And at an infinite remove
 From being like the God of love, (u)
 Oh ! for what crime straitlac'd Calvinian, 5245
 Does thy unmerciful opinion !
 Attempt t' exclude from saving-grace,
 Almost the whole of human race ?
 Gracious and kind compar'd to thee,
 Fell Lucifer himself would be ; 5250
 Oh ! cease a conduct so absurd,
 Nor charge thus foolishly the Lord, (v) But

(t) Two lines from a hymn of Mr. C. Wesley's, (u) 1 John
 iv. 8, 16. (v) Job i. 22.

But better thoughts learn to approve,
And better know the God of love.

J A M E S.

You draw a dreadful picture, Dick, 5255
(Says James) I scarce e'er heard the like;
Howe'er, as to your declamation,
Upon the point of reprobation,
Whatever other people may
Believe herein, I cannot say, 5260
For me, I ne'er believ'd it so
As you appear to think I do;
I never yet a notion fram'd
That God made any to be damn'd
On purpose, or that his decrees 5265
Produce their sin and wickedness;
But that their sin and misery, Jem,
Are from themselves, and not from him:
Nor do I like what many tell,
Of Heathens all being doom'd to hell, 5270
I can't abide in conversation,
To hear them talk on such a fashion,
I think herein they're much to blame,
And ought not thus to judge of them.
However 'tis my fixed thought, 5275
That still we always fairly ought
To give to God on each occasion,
The glory of our *whole* salvation;
I know you reckon to comply
With this, my friend, as well as I, 5280
And herein, Dick, I think you seem
Fairly to come into our scheme;
For, Richard, if in this affair,
The will of man has any share,
I think 'tis plain in such a case, 5285
You must detract from God's free-grace;
In this you therefore seem to me
To hold an inconsistency.

RICHARD.

RICHARD.

I'm glad with all my heart, (says Dick)
 That you express so much dislike, 5290
 And irk to own on this occasion,
 That frightful monster reprobation;
 This with the candour you display,
 Towards the heathen world (I say)
 Shews I think pretty clearly, Jem, 5295
 Your heart is better than your scheme;
 Howe'er, I think in this affair,
 You're mighty inconsistent, sir,
 Because herein your scheme is known,
 T' include the points which you disown; 5300
 And all the wit of man I deem,
 Can ne'er divide them from your scheme;
 These circumstances seem t' attest
 You're but half-Calvinist at best.
 But to be even, you charge me, 5305
 It seems, with inconsistency;
 But herein, James, I think you make
 A very evident mistake,
 Which springs from hence,—in this affair,
 You always take for granted, sir, 5310
 The honour of God's grace can't be
 Consistent with free-agency;
 But this point, I think you will ne'er
 Be able, (James,) to make appear;
 No, on the contrary, 'tis plain 5315
 (As I observ'd before) if man
 Does not possess free-agency,
 There can no day of judgement be;
 Ev'n Christ's own words for ever will,
 Confound all stiff-bound-willers still, 5320
 Who censure, and as error brand,
 A point they do not understand:
 He did not say the Jews *could* not,
 No; but I would and ye *would* not. (w)
 You have observ'd before, that I 5325
 To honour God's free-grace comply; Yes,

Yes, Jemmy, and my scheme I trow,
Is quite consistent with it too ;
This is my trust on this occasion,
For present and complete *salvation* ; 5330
I *only* do on *God* depend,

As the *first leading cause*, my friend,
My trust on *Jesus only* leans,
As the *first great and leading means* : (x)
And, James, I think I fairly can 5335
Ascribe to God upon my plan,
Without the smallest reservation,
The glory of my *whole* salvation.

But I must go ; you see the day,
My friend, begins to wear away ; 5340
Farewell, and may the God of grace,
Grant you and I may both possess
(Whate'er less point each disapprove)
A heart inspir'd with mutual love.

J A M E S.

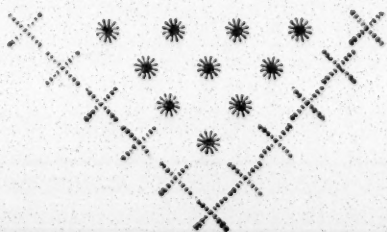
Richard, farewell, but in the end, 5345
When all is said and done, my friend,
You seem but, Dick, in my opinion,
At most, a mongrel Arminian.

R I C H A R D.

And, you a Calvinist half-hearted,
(Richard reply'd) and so they parted.

(x) See Mr. Fletcher's Scripture-Scales, P. 223.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

- Page 7, line 14, in the Preface, supply *in* before sustaining.
- P. 19, Note (o) line 2, for 3302, read, 3300, and for 3552, read, 3550.
- P. 21, Note (7) for *Exek*, read *Ezek*.
- P. 31, line 4, for *my*, read *you*.
- P. 38, line 5, for *will*, read *till*.
- P. 1, leave out the two first lines.
- Ibid. line 18, supply *a* before the comma.
- P. 51, Note (n) for Matt. v. 23, read Matt. v. 11, 12, and remove the marginal letter (o) before John x. 23.
- Ibid. include the second line in the parenthesis.
- P. 53, line 1, read *weight*.
- P. 59, include the second line in the parenthesis.
- Ibid. line 9, put a comma for the period.
- Ibid. put a comma after *that* in the 10th line.
- P. 67, line 23, leave out the comma in *quick*.
- P. 89, for the page-figures 98, read 89.
- P. 90, Note (n) line 2, for 4012, read 4010.
- P. 103, line 13, for *no*, read *to*.
- P. 112, line 27, for *perfect*, read *perfect*.





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